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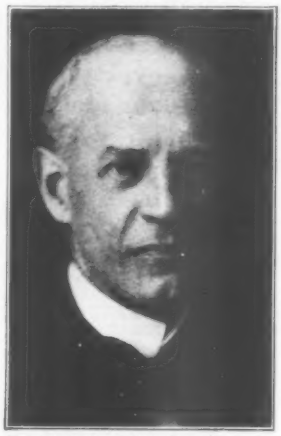


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JOHN GALSWORTHY the most distinguished novelist writing in our language today, is engaged upon a group of stories of men, the themes of which give to them an appeal to anyone capable of reading the beautiful English in which they are written. As a whole they constitute the first sustained work their author has done since completing "The Forsyte Saga," the greatest novel of this generation. The first of these stories will be published in the next—the October—issue of The Red Book Magazine. Its title is

"WATER"

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Brains and Fingers

By M. MERCER KENDIG, A. B.
Director, Department of Education, THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

THOUGHT and work — twin forces that make the world go on!

Tolstoi wrote: "The happiness of men consists in life. *And life is in labor.*" Another great man said: "A man's best friends are his ten fingers." A famous quatrain often attributed to Goethe, but which was in fact written by John S. Dwight (1813-1893), runs: "Rest is not quitting the busy career, rest is in fitting of self to one's sphere."

Work is the enduring spirit of an enlightened and progressive nation. Idleness and vice have always destroyed the civilization of indolent peoples. The fabric of American civilization depends upon the intellectual and industrial vigor of its citizens. And the dawn of the present century saw a new educational theory widen man's usefulness to man. The advent of the vocational school for boys and girls, men and women, heralded a new day in the progress of human training and development.

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M. Mercer Kendig

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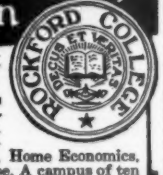
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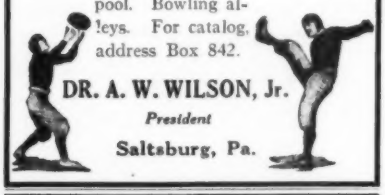
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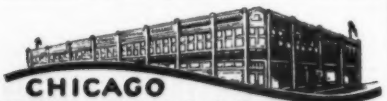
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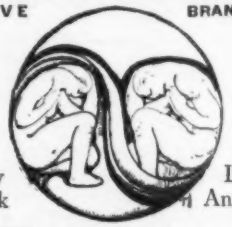
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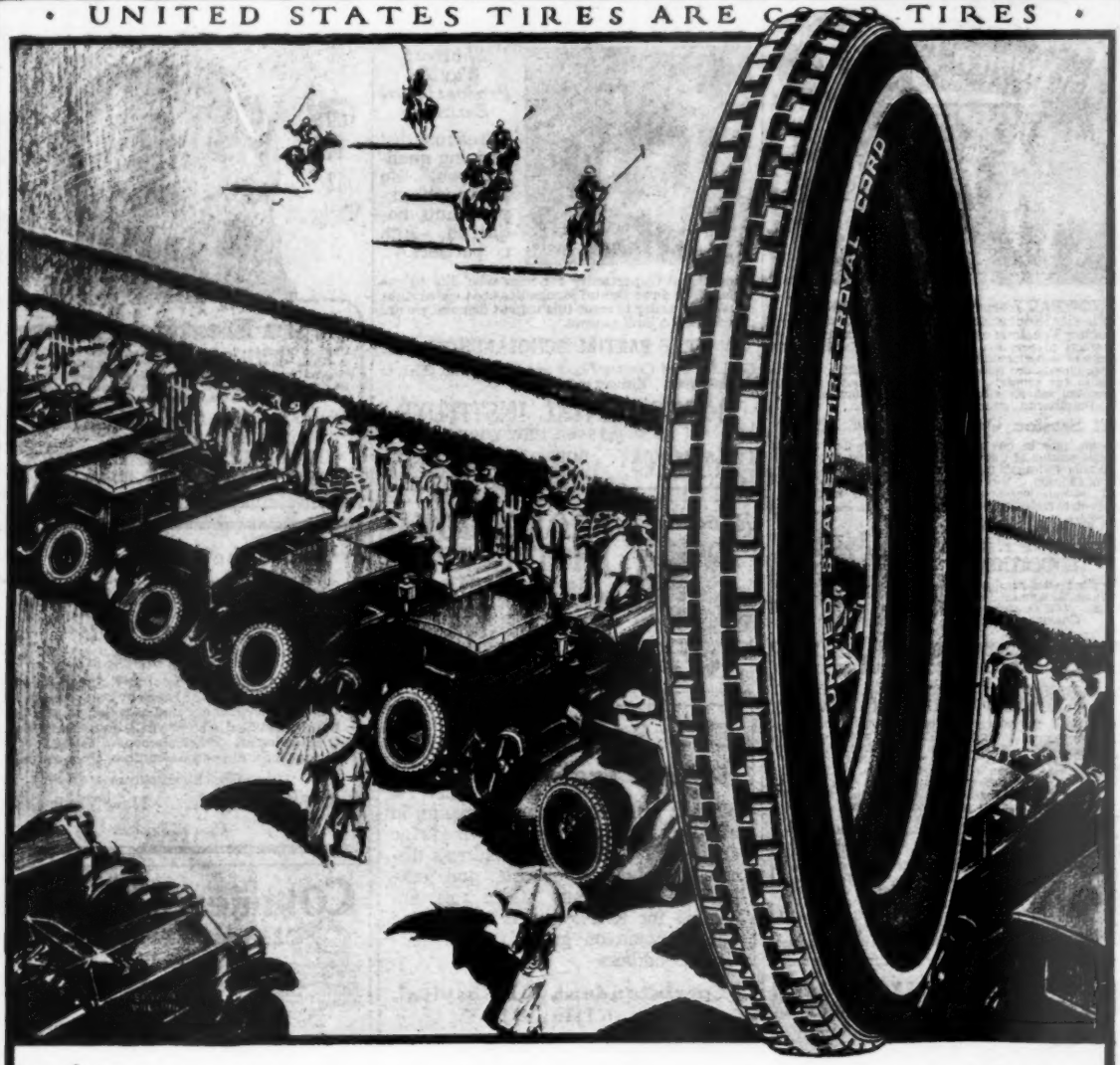
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MISCELLANEOUS SCHOOLS CONTINUED ON PAGE 152

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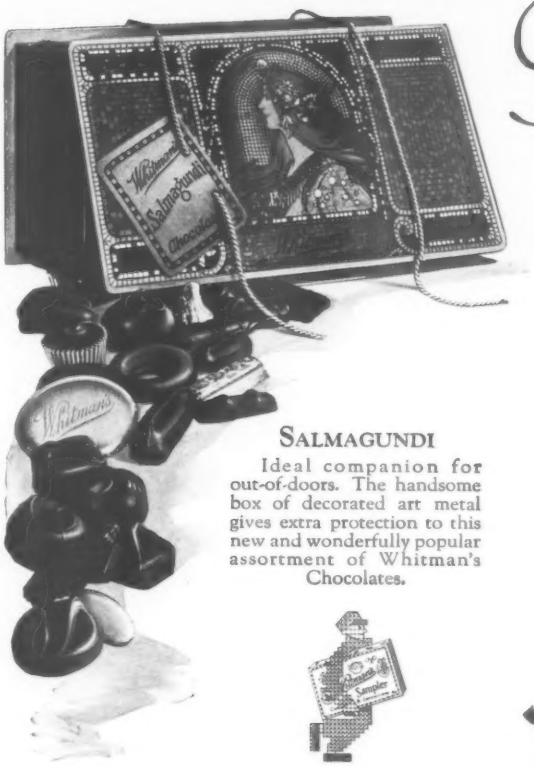


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Summer, with its outdoor life, is the ideal time for storing up surplus health and energy. And in this good work Whitman's Chocolates play a pleasant part.

The craving for chocolates after active sports is best satisfied with Whitman's, the universal chocolates, supplied at nearly all points where people gather in summer-time.

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in "Wildflower"
Photograph by De Mirjian Studios, New York



VALERIE LAVELLA
Film Star
Photograph by Witzel, Los Angeles



MARJORIE LEET
in "Ziegfeld Follies"
Photo by Edward Thayer Monroe, New York



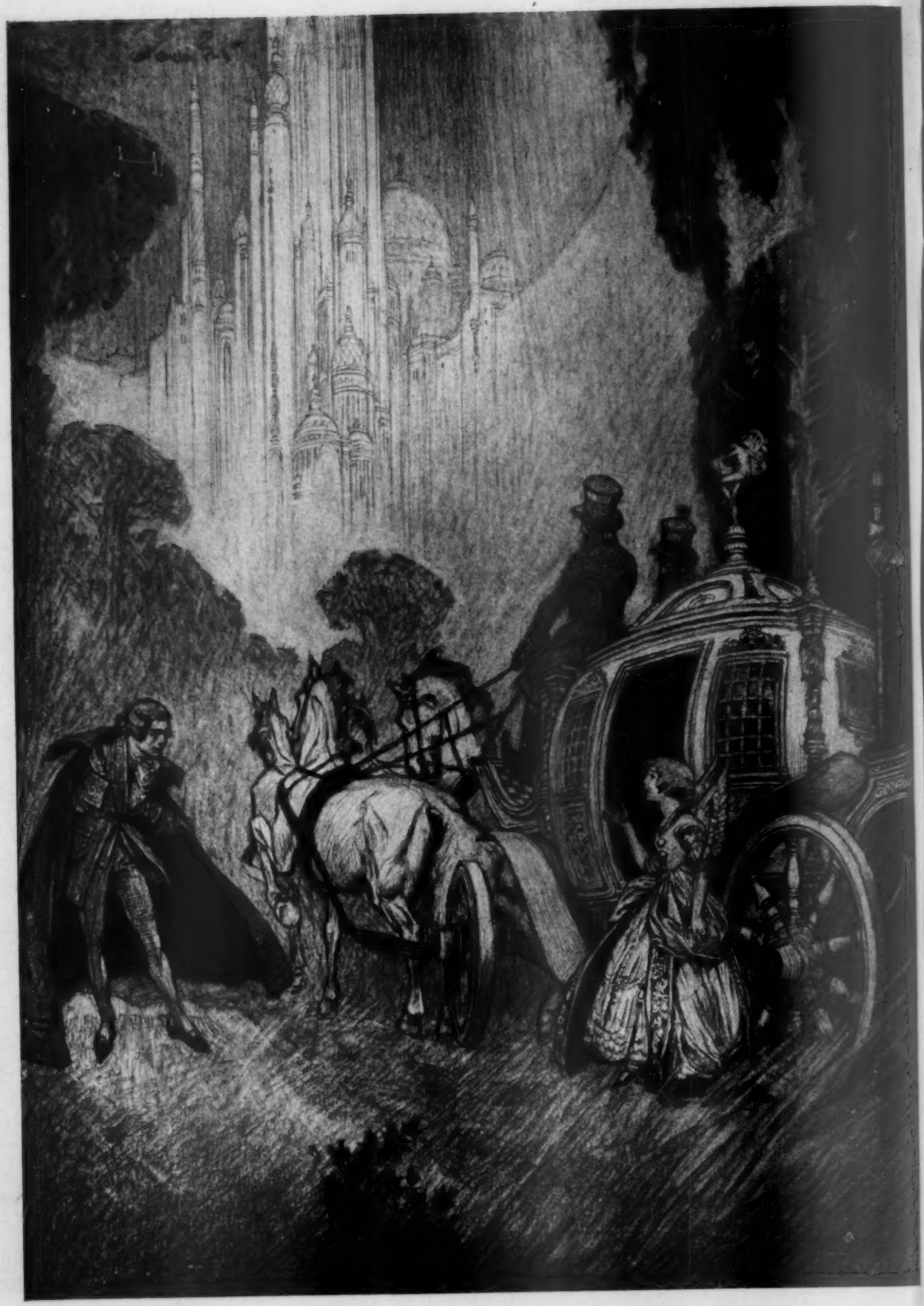
MARION GUNN
in "Paradise Alley"
Photograph by Ira D. Schwarz, New York



MAY BECK
Film Star
Photo by Edward Thayer Monroe, New York



BETTY JEWEL
Film Star
Photograph by Melbourne Spurr, Los Angeles



The Enchanters

By ANGELO PATRI

Decoration by Franklin Booth

THE first of the beneficent tribe to enter and brighten my life was a man with a very black mustache and the ability to pick rabbits out of my pocket, coins out of my ears, goldfish from my hair. When he went away taking the rabbits and the coins and the fish with him, I never grudged them to him. Gladly would I part with all the riches he mined from my hitherto unproductive person if he would but stay to charm my darker hours. When I hinted as much to him, he smiled and said very kindly: "Never mind, sonny. One of my brothers or sisters will be around this way tomorrow and make a magic for you, and you'll see rainbows with pots of gold at each end. See if you don't."

And of course it was true, as it always has been true. The magicians come along and change dull hours into gay ones, and flit away leaving us happy and smiling if a bit wistful. When the weight of the days presses too heavily upon us, and we begin to feel as though one of the witches had clapped her extinguisher over our spirits and choked out the last flickering flame, we summon, if we are wise, our favorite enchanter and wait for the magic.

During the World War a youngish middle-aged man tried to persuade the examining surgeon that he was quite as fit for service as any lad, but the old gentleman smiled benignly over his specs and said: "Well, you'd better keep right on cheering up the home folk. Eat cornbread and cut down on sugar and buy Liberty Bonds, and we'll feel you're doing your share."

That was a gloomy moment. Here were the Allies steadily retreating toward the sea, and he wasn't even given a chance to save them. The crowds pressing into a theater checked him, and he read the sign: "Shoulder Arms. Charlie Chaplin." "Must be for me," said he, and followed the gray-haired, tired-eyed, middle-aged ones who had stepped aside to get a lift of enchantment that would help them carry on for another day. Together they laughed for a couple of hours while a magic army on two twinkling feet raced the enemy to exhaustion. Wonderful Charlie, who could wipe away the tears of grief-stricken people and make them forget for a time the weight on their hearts.

Some folk raise cool eyebrows at Charlie, and the man with the rabbits, and the circus, and the funny person who makes faces and sings excruciatingly and tumbles admirably. "They're not artists, you know." No? Well, what of it? They're the magicians at whose touch we shed the tattered garments of the jaded spirit, step into the pumpkin gold coach and ride gayly off to the ball.

Whether Aladdin rubs an ancient lamp, or the godmother rises from the ashes, or the king bends from the throne to make the magic, is all one. The soul knoweth its own enchanter, and none shall say it nay. To the whole hilarious, hearty tribe, from goblin to king—greeting!

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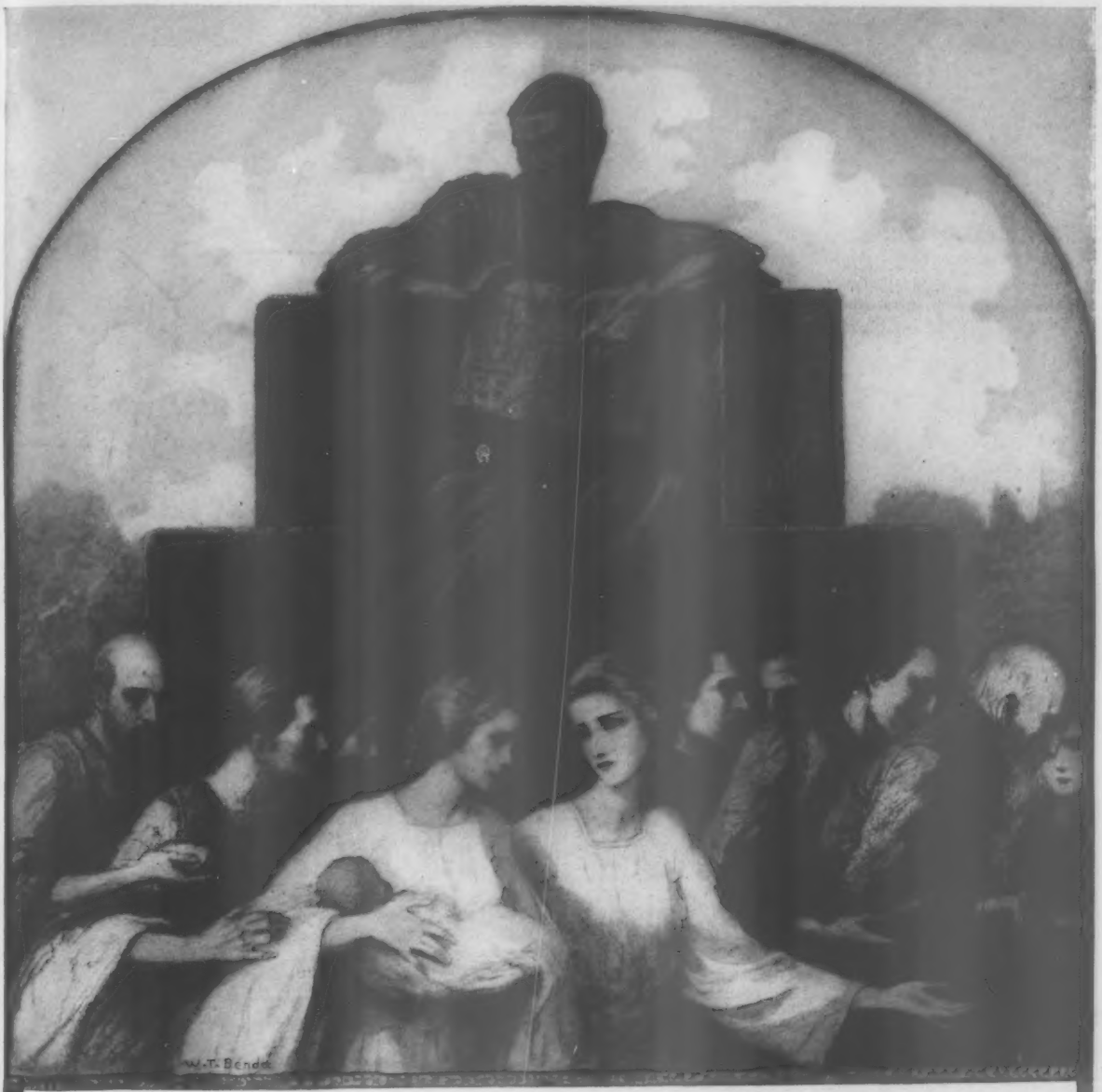
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SELFISHNESS

By EDGAR A. GUEST

Think of yourself from first to last:
Guard yourself from the wintry blast;
Feed your stomach and quench your thirst;
Feather your nest and feather it first;
Fly to your pleasures and dance them through—
There is nobody else in this world but you.

Think of yourself—and right or wrong,
Give no thought to the passing throng.
What if your conduct should bring to shame
Those who honor and share your name?
What if they're hurt by the things you do?
Why should their suffering trouble you?

Live for yourself, but don't complain
When you have come to the world's disdain.
Don't return when the night comes on
And wonder where all of your friends have gone.
Carry no burden except your own,
But always be ready to weep alone.

But if you wish for the happy years
And the love of a friend who sees your tears,
And the world's respect and an honored name,
And all the joys which the gentle claim,
You must think of others in all you do—
You must think of them first, and last of you.

DECORATION BY W. T. BENDA



Still the thrill of courtship

Is your skin fresh, lovely, attractive? Or have you allowed it to become sallow, oily? Women who do not protect their complexions age unnecessarily. Here is the simple secret all may know.

THE supreme test of a wife's charm, a famous novelist recently was quoted, comes after two years of marriage.

Sparkling life and warm cheeks, wives who are ever brides—how few women realize the part these play in modern life. Today is a day of youth prolonged, with freshness and charm at every side—*no woman can afford* to neglect herself.

You may not be beautiful, but you can be charming, and that surpasses all beauty. Start with correct skin care—not costly beauty treatments, but common-sense, daily care. The means are simple, as thousands will tell you, just the balmy lather of Palmolive—the perfect blend of palm and olive oils, scientifically saponified.

Today begin this simplest of all beauty methods. See what one week will bring

Use powder and rouge if you wish. But never leave them on over night. They clog the pores, often enlarge them. Blackheads and disfigurements often follow. They must be washed away.

Wash your face gently with soothing Palmolive. Then massage it softly into the skin. Rinse thoroughly. Then repeat both washing and rinsing. If your skin is inclined to dryness, apply a touch of good cold cream—that is all. Do this regularly, and particularly in the evening.

The world's most simple beauty treatment

Thus in a simple manner, millions since the days of Cleopatra have found beauty, charm and Youth Prolonged.

No medicaments are necessary. Just remove the day's accumulations of dirt and oil and perspiration, cleanse the pores, and Nature will be kind to you. Your skin will be of fine texture. Your color will be good. Wrinkles will not be your problem as the years advance.

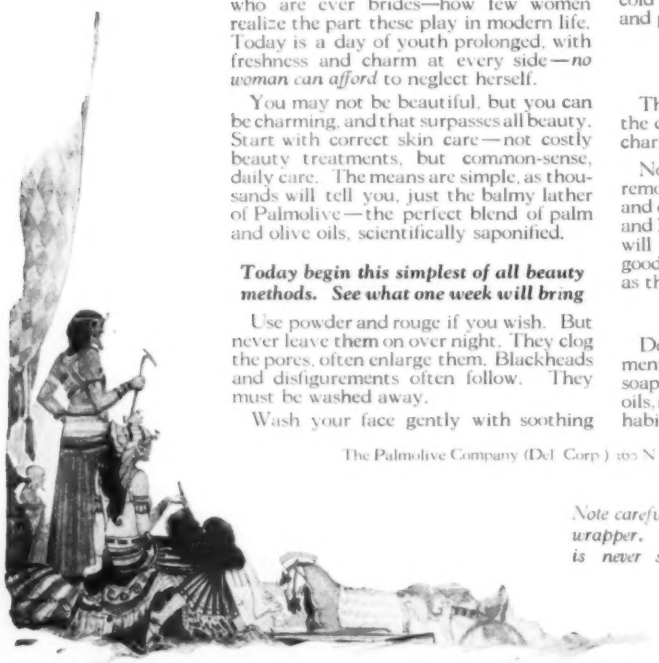
Avoid this mistake

Do not use ordinary soaps in the treatment given above. Do not think any green soap, or represented as of palm and olive oils, is the same as Palmolive. The Palmolive habit will keep that schoolgirl complexion.

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Note carefully the name and wrapper. Palmolive Soap is never sold unwrapped



2564

A COMMON-SENSE EDITORIAL

By BRUCE BARTON

Keeping Going

A RAILROAD recently elected a new president. I read attentively the newspaper stories of his career, and nowhere did I discover any intimation that he is a genius, or endowed with brilliancy beyond the measure of his fellows. Rather, the reports laid emphasis on the fact that he began work in the lowest ranks, and for thirty-five years had plugged steadily ahead.

It reminded me of the conversation which took place between a friend of mine and the conductor of that railroad's crack train.

"We do not seem to be going very much faster than an ordinary train," said my friend as he puffed his cigar in the comfortable club-car. "I suppose that is a tribute to the smoothness of the road-bed."

"Not entirely," replied the conductor. "The truth is, we don't go very much faster than an ordinary train."

"No?" exclaimed my friend in surprise.

"Not very much faster," the conductor repeated; "but *we keep on going all the time.*"

Every single year in New York I am more impressed with the certain triumph of steady-going mediocrity. The meek—which is to say, the pluggers—*do* verily inherit the earth.

"Do you know who it is that loses money in Wall Street?" a veteran broker asked once. "It is the temperamental men who are easily enthused and easily depressed. They get discouraged when things don't go right, and sell out at the bottom. The stolid man takes another hitch in his belt, hangs on and rides up again."

Said the president of one of the biggest corporations in the world: "There are only two brilliant minds in this whole organization." The brilliant minds occupy places of importance and profit, but not the *top* places. The top places are held by men who have arrived there through steady application and staying power.

I remember the first high-salaried man on whom my youthful eyes ever rested. I was a high-school kid, and an older friend pointed him out to dazzle me. "There," he whispered in awed tones, "is a ten-thousand-dollar man."

That was many years ago. The other day I met that glittering phenomenon. He is middle-aged and not at all dazzling; hundreds of pluggers who were hardly making ends meet when he was in his glory, are far ahead of him today.

I do not covet for my sons any brilliance, any magnetism, any striking personal attributes that will open all doors to them at a touch. I covet for them hard jaws and firm muscles, the capacity to stay with their work an hour longer than the other fellow, and to hold on when more brilliant men have decided that the thing is too slow, and have quit.

I propose that they add a thirteenth exercise to their daily dozen—this to consist in reading this brief autobiographical note:

"Five times received I forty stripes save one; thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day have I been in the deep. In journeyings often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers ..... in weariness and painfulness ..... in hunger and thirst ..... in cold and nakedness ....."

Some life, wasn't it? Yet the hand which penned those words *also* wrote: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

He kept the faith and kept going; and his soul still marches on.

"But you don't know me, sir."

"Ah, but I do, Lady. Thy fair face betrays thy maskéd eyes. Thou'rt none other than the charming Sally of my dreams!"



The simplest, safest aid to natural beauty

MOST women know that daily cleansing with pure soap and water is indispensable if one is to achieve and maintain a clear, healthy skin. Indeed, this, together with good health, constitutes the only sure foundation for a really beautiful complexion.

But many women do not yet realize that soap's *only* function for the skin is to *cleanse*. Magical promises of cures or transformations cannot be carried out by any soap, whatever its ingredients or price.

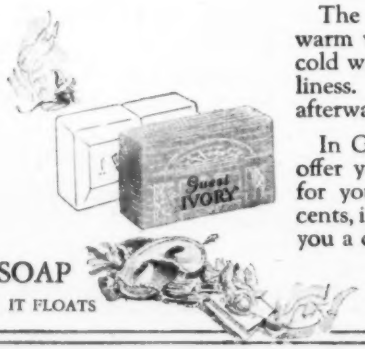
For instance, if artificial coloring matter, medicaments or heavy perfumes could add anything to the beneficial qualities of pure soap, we would have put them into Ivory Soap long ago, for our aim has always been to make, in Ivory, the finest possible soap for the skin.

But no! Ivory is, and always will be, simply pure *soap* —white, mild, gentle, delicately fragrant, *safe!*

The gentle stimulation of a face-bath with Ivory and warm water, followed by rinsing and a dash of cool or cold water, brings fresh color—the natural glow of cleanliness. If your skin is dry, use a little pure cold cream afterwards.

In Guest Ivory, designed for slim feminine fingers, we offer you genuine Ivory Soap in a dainty size especially for your washstand. Guest Ivory's modest price, five cents, is not a measure of its value, for if we were to charge you a dollar, we could give you no finer, purer soap.

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IVORY SOAP

99⁴⁴/₁₀₀% PURE IT FLOATS

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The RED BOOK Magazine

SEPTEMBER 1924. Vol. XLIII, NUMBER 5 KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN, *Editor*

Here begins the greatest novel Mr. Hughes has ever written

and his eleventh to be first and exclusively published in this Magazine. Timely as today's paper, it is still a love story for all time, vibrating with humanity and revealing the depths and peaks of modern life.



"I'm rather nice in one way. . . . . From my knee to my ankle is slim and long. I'm a lady there, anyway."

Destiny

By

Rupert Hughes

Illustrated by Arthur I. Keller

PROLOGUE IN HEAVEN

FROM a sky above the sky four angels peered down on this earth where it spins as a mote of dust in the typhoon of innumerable universes.

They mused upon us as men might bend over a windblown anthill and wonder at the earnest antics of creatures whose aims and deeds were altogether other than their own.

Early night darkened one side of the gleaming sphere among whose swarming millions two humans, far apart in distance as in character, caught the especial attention of the angels: a woman known as Niobe Fenn, who had youth, beauty and riches, yet paced in frantic restlessness her sumptuous room as if it were a jail; a man called Joel Kimlin, who was young but poor and uncouth, and who did not move as he lay in a lonely thicket above the trough of a country road, watching, with rifle poised, for an enemy he hardly knew.

The four angels were of four moods: derision, disgust, pity and indifference; and after the manner of angels, they made known their thoughts to one another.

Seeing now how the rich young woman Niobe repeated the woes of rich young women from the times of princesses who were dust when Cleopatra wept in her palace; and how the poor young man Joel laid such an ambush as assassins have lurked in since man was, the angels exchanged their sentiments.

The first was a derider, and he mocked mankind:

"The fools! The silly, silly fools! That girl there, whom her parents gave the name of Niobe, has everything that every one

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of them desires, yet outweeps her namesake and is as far from happiness as any shoddy creature waiting with tears on her painted cheeks at a corner. This Niobe has no children to mourn, but she has been given woven light to hide her flesh in, and gems like stars, servants to fetch and carry for her, and suitors offering themselves in slavery. Yet she sobs and will not be comforted.

"And the lout yonder in the woods will make himself another Cain and damn himself to lifelong gloom for the moment's pleasure of letting his soul explode its wrath against a neighbor. He worships a god he calls Revenge, as ugly and odious as any of the other countless gods they manufacture down there out of their own worst impulses, then worship with groveling awe—all as unlike God as only gods can be. I cannot decide whether the rich or the poor are the greater imbeciles, whether the men or the women are the sillier, or whether the wicked or the good are the more futile. The fools! The total fools!"

The second angel was wrathful, and protested:

"Fools? No, fiends! Monsters of greed that cannot be appeased! Despoilers of one another, destroying in the name of love, and committing infamies in the name of piety; upholding their deities with forgeries and lies, tyrannies, butcheries, torments and abuse; inventing devils for their own terror and devising hells for the future abode of their enemies; calling their hatreds 'ideals' and using them as clubs to beat their fellows with; hugging delusions, sanctifying cruelties and throttling reason and discovery with a mania they call faith. Am I not right, brother?"

He besought the approval of the angel at his side, but that one answered with contempt:

"They are too stupid to be either amusing or abominable. What does it matter whether Niobe weeps or laughs? She has little enough reason for either curious spasm of her muscles. What difference does it make whether the coward there kills or spares the coward he lies in wait for? I see them only as automatons pretending that they move themselves, all of them blind to the strings that jerk them in unending repetition of the same patterns, the same motions. Aside from a few toys they have made for themselves, and a few follies laid aside, what are they doing, saying, feeling, now in America that they did not do and say and think yesterday in—Assyria, was it? Or the day before, in the caves of the browless men? They are as tiresome as the waves of their oceans; only so many waves, a little frothier in their storms, a little flatter in the calms; but always only waves in water. They tire me."

The last of the four was of a gentler mind:

"To me they are not fools, nor fiends, nor puppets, but poor sick victims of the plague called life. When youth weeps, how sad it is! When neither beauty nor wealth affords shelter from sorrow, how wretched their world is! I am sorry for the man who is hurrying home in ignorance of the bullets that threaten to end his days in horror. But the man who kills must suffer too, or he would not kill. The blow that slays a brother man is a convulsion of intolerable pain.

"As for me, I suffer all their woes for them and with them. Whether they are fools or fiends or jumping-jacks, they are in agony. I pity all the inhabitants of all the stars. And I pity the God that made them all."

"Hush!" cried two of the others. "Pity if you must the worms that writhe in the slime of earth, but above all, avoid the sacrilege of sacrileges and never insult with your pity the All-powerful!"

But the third, the indifferent angel, murmured:

"Peace and quiet in the name of Paradise!"

Rebuked, the other angels returned to the human spectacle, and though the pitiful angel mourned in silence, the derisive angel laughed again, and the scornful angel vented his wrath.

Now, it chanced that God passed by along the parapet as a general might make the rounds of his camp or a supreme magnate inspect an infinite factory roaring with wheels and belts, with mills and furnaces, caldrons and flaming chimneys. Noting the humor of the angels, He paused to glance at the objects of their censure on the earth and was moved to a gentle reproof:

"It might be, my children, that if you were in their places you would do no better."



Two of the angels, like infants spoiled with indulgence, answered: "Sire, you would not put us on the plane of mere women and men?"

"Put yourselves on their plane and see."

"Should we not do less ridiculous things?"

"Should we not do less abominable things?"

God answered with riddle for riddle:

"Would you not do the same things?"

He was about to pass on, when the derisive angel bespoke Him:

"It would amuse me to know."

And the scornful angel echoed with a pleading tone:

"I should like to prove myself in such a test."

And it pleased God to say to the two angels:

"Descend then to the earth and inhabit, each of you, the body of one of my creatures, and learn what it is to go to and fro in the earth and walk up and down in it."

The angels, seeking perhaps some new thing to vary the unchanging bliss of heaven, rejoiced at this permission, and accepted the Divine challenge eagerly.

"Only," God said, "I make you these conditions: On entering the bodies you select, you shall leave behind all the powers you have as my angels; you shall forget for the period of your earthly sojourn all that you have learned of life from here. You shall be subject to every bond that shackles the human soul in its cell of flesh. I will not help you, though you call upon me from the depths of fear, bewilderment, remorse."

The angels pondered a moment, then gave assent. And so God said:

"Choose!"

The scornful angel delayed to say:

"I would not choose an easy life to lead."

"You will find it hard to find an easy life to lead," God warned.

But the angels would not be deterred from the adventure. They searched the earth, perplexed by the sudden richness of the field, and could not make a choice. The angel of indifference taunted them:

"That wailing woman Niobe and that vile murderer Joel Kimlin, whom both of you despise—why not make them the vehicles of your exploit?"

The angel of scorn answered:



"But what is there to want? Where does anything lead? What does anything get you?"

"I would not choose a life of such facility as that of a woman who has everything good that earth can offer. I will be the ignorant, the villainous man."

The derisive angel cast about for some other vessel of flesh, but the angel of pity sighed:

"What could be more difficult than the fate of one who has youth, beauty, wealth, love and lovers—so many advantages, with nothing to gain and all to lose?"

The derisive angel agreed to this, and said:

"Then I will be that woman Niobe. She weeps now, but I have seen her laugh at her own tears."

And God was pleased with the courage of His angels and their choice, and He said:

"One further boon I grant you. It is not permitted to humanity to choose its place or time of birth, but it is always possible to forestall the allotted death, and you can end your venture whenever it wearies you or baffles you.

"Mankind has but a limited choice of deeds, but it can repent what it has done. You will not wrestle long with the clay before you learn how stubborn a material it is to mold. You will speedily experience remorse, and despair will often be your mood.

"Sometime when you are overwhelmed in the deep waters of bewilderment, I will send you a messenger to offer you escape."

The angel of derision smiled and said:

"Our Father puts as little trust in our bravery as in our perseverance."

The angel of pity felt that God suffered as He answered:

"The look of a house or of a heart is not the same from within as from without. I would be a merciful landlord."

"How shall we know that messenger?" the angel of scorn inquired. "As a spirit? a form? a fire? a cloud?"

"As a voice," said God, "a voice still, small, confusing and confused. Whenever you are overborne with perplexity and dismay, listen, and ponder."

The angels were astonished to find that God regarded their voyage more solemnly, more anxiously, than they had done, and they were minded to withdraw from it, but God was saying:

"Go, then, and return when you will or when at last your bodies die under the ruthless charge of your souls. That man Joel and that woman Niobe shall sleep, and their spirits shall go back whence they came, so that you may enter your new tene-



To sanctify the deed and the weapon, she fetched Joel's rifle and laid it in his hands with her blessing.

ments alone. And so, for the little while of a lifetime—which will seem longer to you there than here—farewell!"

And now the angels understood for the first time the bliss of Paradise, because it was now already lost to them. The earth became suddenly a whirlpool of dreadful menaces, and they hung back a moment, as divers do when they look down into a seething sea.

They besought their companion angels to accompany them, but the angel of indifference refused, saying:

"I am not discontent."

And the angel of pity refused, saying:

"I suffer enough, watching from here the miseries you must embrace, the perils that will embrace you."

Then the two voyagers commended themselves to their destinies, and slipped into the unfathomable blue.

Down, down, down they went, like torches of dwindling flame dropped into a bottomless abyss of light.

At last they struck the ocean of air that envelopes the earth, flashed through it like shooting stars, and then more slowly drifted to the ground. There, after a moment of bewilderment, they remembered their purposes, and unseen, unheeded, made their way to their separate goals.

Chapter One

THIS Niobe, whom the angels had watched and whom the angel of derision chose for his abode, was the despair of her friends and the greater dismay of herself. Her soul tossed upon live coals of unrest; yet she laughed from the flames like one who, possessed of devils, giggles in martyrdom.

She kept asking herself and the world, "Why?" and "Why not?" and "What's the use?"

Sometimes, when her parents or her lovers praised her beauty, she would cry out as if insulted:

"I'm not beautiful! I'm hideous! I'm deformed!"

At other times she would boast of some feature, turning her head in profile to say:

"I have just one good point; my nose is perfect." Or she would draw herself out to an unexpected length as if she were a jointed telescope, and she would strike the position of a Grecian statue, purring:

"I'm rather nice in one way: from my breast to my hips I am good and long, don't you think? And then from my knee to my ankle is slim and long. I'm a lady there, anyway."

Then she would collapse again like a telescope suddenly shut up, and fall on a chair or a couch in a heap of abject awkward humility, sneering:

"What rot! My sister is much more of a lady than I am—and she has the same parents, and her waist is thick, and her legs are stumpy, and her ankles are peasant. That's life! Nothing really means anything, does it? You don't get anywhere, do you? I wish to heaven I could find something solid to set my feet on—if it were only just one little tiny spot—or one character I could trust. But of course I'd be sick of it in a minute, so what would be the good? I get so weary of my friends I could scream. The better the friend, the more I loathe her—or him; and the sooner I tire. I'm an awful mess—aren't I?"

She talked and thought as she wrote her letters—in spasms of exclamation, with only dashes for punctuation, strange gaps of logic and words writ large and underscored fantastically.

She treated her lovers, who were frequent but not long-lasting, as she treated her family.



She would take the most virulent offense from a compliment of gracious intent or warm emotion. She would strike aside a caressing hand, draw her head back like a snake's and greet with a basilisk stare a kiss she had seemed to invite.

From a protest of hurt indignation, from a denunciation or a bitter insult, she would, with equal whimsy, extract some delightful tribute, and seizing in a clenched embrace the enemy of an instant ago, smother him or her in endearments—only to become ice again when the victim responded.

She would order a youth from her presence, and when he turned to leave, fling herself upon him and call him a dear old angel for paying any mind to her fool talk.

All this was interpreted as fickle unreliability by her more serious lovers, as picturesque variety by her gayer swains, and by her family as a form of insanity at best temporary. Her mother had understood her, adored her and been adored, though they fought each other at times with the screaming abuse of rowdy neighbors.

Her mother had been unlike Niobe in most of her qualities, and yet had interpreted the girl aright, perhaps because she realized the qualities that had gone to make up her daughter's soul and body.

Mrs. Fenn had been a little plump woman who managed to be haughty and queenly though her frame and her wit were almost sparrowlike. She was extravagant, flirtatious, a houri in manner to a certain point, and then suddenly a virgin, a Medusa who froze her flaming suitor with a glance of horror. When as a girl she had married Niobe's father, she had told him:

"I don't love you, Colonel Fenn; but I need your money and I like your neckties. I warn you, though, that I wont live with

you. Some day I'll want some children, maybe, but it will be a long while from now and you'll have to wait till I let you know. If you're crazy enough to take me on those terms, let the parson do his worst."

Colonel Fenn's colonelcy had come from being appointed on the Governor's staff for a campaign of banquets. He accepted her conditions with amused incredulity.

And so he married her and settled a fortune on her and they sailed away to the Bermudas. To his stupefaction he found that she had meant what she said, that she always meant just what she said. So he waited—waited years.

OF that strange union Niobe Fenn was born. Her mother hated her before she came, but loved her at the first thin wail she uttered.

Niobe's cradle was a nest of long silences broken with gurglings of laughter followed by squalling mutinies. She kicked and flung, spewed and yowled. She admired her toes with a tireless interest that might have justified the prophecy of a dancing career—if any prophet could have been rash enough to threaten a Fenn with a future on the stage.

Niobe grew fast and furious. She fought with a strange frenzy of life that compelled a certain homage. A rule was a thing to break. A wise counsel was a thing to be treated with contempt. A solemn rebuke was the funniest joke in the world. Scandal and gossip were tributes from contemptible fools.

Her father regarded her as a wild intruder, a punishment and a living rebuke.

But her mother knew her for what she was. She judged, from the little careless bywords and the exquisite thoughts that escaped as through crevices of defiance, that Niobe was the tenderest and sweetest of souls. If she fluttered and chattered and beat her wings, it was only as a bird makes desperate war with the hand that clenches it. It fights because it is afraid. Life held Niobe like a fist of cruel fingers. She got now a foot free, now a wing, but never her whole self all at once. Her heart beat itself almost to death, and the songs she might have poured forth choked in her throat. . . . .

Today Niobe had gone for a long motor foray with Bret Rattoon, one of her most reckless cronies, a youth born like her to wealth and to the contempts it inspires for restraint or correction.

Rattoon was humble and simple and gracious to his equals and to his servants and the very poor, but the multitudes between found him a snob, as he found them muckers. He was a knight of what has always been called the old school, reckless, insolent, full of laughter and melancholy, of idleness and of tireless endurance. He liked Niobe because he never knew where he would find her. She was as tricky as a hostile scout, and her opinions were always news. This afternoon she had driven his car so foolhardily that he was nearer death perhaps than he had ever been in Flanders. Now she was in the mood of Mary fondling her snowy lamb.

She had checked the car in the presence of a landscape like a vast arrangement, something designed and built by a great gardener, with a horizon of intention, with hills modeled for a set purpose, plains sweeping away in orderly contours, trees placed at their best, and a sky full of clouds that showed the joy of the brush-stroke.

Niobe gazed for a long while. Before Bret had thought of speaking, she had commanded: "Shut up!"

After a time he slid one of his hands over one of hers where it clasped the wheel. She brushed it away as if a fly had settled there. By and by she murmured:

"Nice!"

He pretended to be in doubt: "Meaning me—or Nature?" When she did not answer, he grumbled: "Nature's a nice li'l old lady. Don't know how we'd get along without her."

Behind a hill the sun went down like the great brass disk at the end of a pendulum in a hall-clock. Dusk came on all at once. There was a sudden star in the western crimson. . . . . There was no crimson. . . . . There were many stars in the bright blue. It was night.

A wind came prowling with the sniffing stealth and haste of a pack of wolves. Niobe turned up her collar, and Bret shivered but did not dare suggest that they move on.

Motorists of respectable soul whose headlights swept them as with whitewash brushes, turned their eyes aside as from a pair of lovers and felt resentment, disgust, envy or good-will according to their own characters. The earnest-minded felt grim.

This was the new crime of the new era. On all the roads dark automobiles were to be found driven aside into the most convenient seclusions. Passers-by going at a rate of forty miles an hour assumed that young people were parked there for petting purposes. And they felt the world an ugly and a vicious place, filled with a conscienceless youth. They forgot that young lovers have always sought escape from older eyes. In the caves they doubtless found deeper grots, in the forests higher boughs.

The automobile inevitably furnished a means of escape from family inspection and neighborly curiosity, and was inevitably denounced for a new peril, as if spooning and coquetry had never before been heard of. When they are no longer practiced, the end of the world is near.

It struck Bret Rattoon as a rather foolish joke that he should be credited or discredited by all the fleeting wayfarers as a wicked flirt when his companion would not even let him hold her hand. Mankind has always hated the name without the game.

But when the roadside grew so cold and the landscape so bleakly vague that he could forbear no longer, Bret drew close and slid his arm back of Niobe and slowly pressed her toward him. He was so encouraged by her nonresistance that he set his lips against her icy cheek. Still she did not protest, but when he said to her with all his gentleness:

"You darling thing, I love you!"

she dazed him by sighing:

"Bret, I want to die."

She spoke as if she meant it. He pleaded:

"You? Die? With all your youth and beauty and everything on earth that anybody could want?"

"But what is there on earth that anybody could want?"

"Well, I'm not a real-estate agent, but there are several things I could recommend."

"For instance? After all, what's the good of anything?"

"Oh, I say now! That's drawing it pretty strong. If you were a toothless old hag in the snow, you might talk, but look at what you've got. You can have whatever you want."

"But what is there to want? Anything worth while, I mean. Where does anything lead? What does anything get you?"

"This road will get you home, if you'll start the car."

"But when I'm home, where am I? And what's home? A house, a hotel, bed and bath and meals and a few clothes to take off and put on! A place to come to and rest up so that you can go some place else and come back and go out again. And where are we all going? Where are those stars going?"

"Thanks for the compliment of asking, but I really don't know. All I do know is that I'm going to freeze to death if you don't cut out this drool and move on. Give me the wheel."

"All right."

He got out, ran round the front of the car and took her place as she shifted to his former seat. There was a snarl and puffing, and then the pterodactyl took wing, scudding through mile on mile of starlit land. Other cars came up blindingly and roared past. It was something like darting through a constellation of double stars.

NOT a word came from Niobe, and Bret conned the road ahead, an absorbing manuscript, as his headlights brought page after page out of the dark and let it fall away under the wheels.

After a time Bret could hear Niobe laughing, a tinkling imbecile little laugh more ominous than amusing.

"Can't we share the good news?"

He was sorry he asked; for Niobe answered as if from far off:

"I was imagining that I killed myself and went up to heaven. And the first person I met was Mamma. And she said: 'Baby, how did you ever come to do such a bit of rotten sportsmanship? What a darling little fool you always are! Quite reliable!' And I said: 'Mamma child, how on earth did you ever get to heaven, after all that riotous living of yours?' And she said: 'God knew what hard sledding I had had with the ill-fitting soul He gave me, so He said He really couldn't blame me for what bad work I did, and He was pleasantly surprised that a few rather decent things got past me.' That's what Mamma said, and then I said, remembering that I had killed myself, 'I suppose I'm barred out,' and Mamma said: 'It doesn't sound like God to shut the gate of heaven in the face of any poor soul who found earth too cruel to endure. I'll ask Him.' And before she could get back, I woke up and found myself here with you."

Bret reached one hand from his wheel and groped for hers, and she took his hand in her two hands and lifted it to her cheek. He felt a tear or two splash on it from her eyes, and he squeezed her fingers hard.

She spoke solemnly now:

"I want to see Mamma! She was the only one that ever had



Niobe spoke to herself: "I'll never let a man know me too well. . . . . I want Bret, but I'm afraid to lose him if I marry him."

any sense—especially when she drank too much. And she suffered so! I've seen her turn almost blue and gnash her teeth in pain, and go right on smiling and talking tea-talk to any old visitor. What a good sport she was! And what's so good as a good sport?"

"Only another one like you, Ni!" said Bret.

It cut him to the heart to hear her uncanny laughter and her fantasies. He revered and feared Niobe as a fisherman might watch upward at a Lorelei combing her hair and crooning a song of laughter on a cliff while he let the waves coax him toward the fatal rocks.

Niobe leaned against his shoulder and clawed at him, laughing:

"Oh, what a jackass life we lead, eating thistles and hee-hawing and kicking our heels up!"

And Bret gathered her tight and sighed:

"Wonderful! You angel!"

He little dreamed how soon an angel was to possess her.

In due time—or much less—they reached Niobe's home. The car came round the circling road to the portico with a slash. Niobe leaped out and flung a careless good-night without looking round, and ran to the door, pressed the electric button again and again, and when admitted, darted up the stairs.

And now she was alone in her room. Such a room! For no reason that she could discover, a wave of sorrow enveloped her. She smothered in a gulf of pure woe. She fought against it, as she fought every mood that flowed about her and filled her like a choking gas. She flung off her dress as if it were a beggar's shift; she kicked off her slippers—one of them landed on her dressing-table and caused a scurry among a heap of Orient pearls, her mother's.

The color-theme of the room was amethyst; all the tints were amethystine. The silk hangings at the window repeated the silken coverlet on the bed, and the bed burned under an autumnal drift of cushions. The very wood of the chairs had been stained amethyst. The dressing-table was enormous, and seemed to support as many bottles, flasks, vials and jars as a china shop—crystals leading the light through mazy rooms and flashing it back, porcelain holding it in soft glimmering, liquid essences dyeing it in somber glows.

But the dreamy luxury of the room was lost upon Niobe's frantic mood; besides, it was familiar *(Continued on page 147)*

The Vanish

By

F. Britten Austin



"What I'd rather write for you than anything else," said Britten Austin to the editor of this magazine one day a year ago, "is a series of detective stories, of what I believe to be a new sort." Mr. Austin was urged to gratify his desire; and the result is a series of stories of which this is the first. You're going to like the amazing Quentin Quayne more and more as you become better acquainted with him in the stories to follow.

THE uncomfortable sinking at the pit of my stomach was not entirely caused by the sudden upward shoot of the elevator to the eighth floor of the new pseudo-Greek building I had entered from Piccadilly Circus. It persisted when, after a step or two along that topmost corridor, I hesitated for a moment outside a mahogany door neatly lettered *"The Q. Q. Agency."* In fact, I felt almost sick. For me, it was the last throw of the dice. I did not need anyone to tell me that an ex-officer without a definite profession was a drug on the labor market. I knew it by bitter experience. And the only specter of a profession to which I could lay any claim was the fact that, after stopping a machine-gun bullet in Bourlon Wood, I had been transferred to the Intelligence branch and employed, thanks to some fluency in foreign languages, on counter-espionage work. It was remembering this, and in desperation rather than with the faintest hope, that, with my last postage stamp, I had written to the Q. Q. Agency and asked if there was a chance of employment.

The chance was infinitesimal. I had never come into personal contact with the Q. Q. Agency, but I had heard enough whispers about it in my war-time Intelligence work to know that, modestly though it refrained from advertising itself to the general public, it was perhaps the most efficient private intelligence bureau in the world. I knew that official superiors, high above me on the topmost summits of the administrative Olympus, did not disdain to work in close connection with it. It was, if those whispers spoke truly, a bureau of highly trained specialists presided over by a genius—the legendary Quentin Quayne himself. There was small possibility that such an organization would recruit itself from casual applicants; it would pick and choose its own men. And even when, incredulous of my own eyes, I had read the letter making an appointment for ten-thirty that morning, I had jeered with bitter pessimism at myself. Two minutes' conversation with me would amply convince Mr. Quentin Quayne that I was utterly destitute of any real qualifications for the job. I was so miserably conscious of this certainty that I hesitated with my hand on that doorknob.

But I turned it.

A few minutes later, having convinced the rather skeptical personnel of an outer office of the authenticity of my business, I stood on the thick, soft carpet of a large room through the farther windows of which I had a vaguely perceived view over the roofs of the adjoining buildings to Big Ben, misty in the background. The perception of the view was vague, for my eyes instinctively focused themselves upon the man who sat with his back to those windows, at a massive desk islanded some way out into the room. He looked up at my entrance—a ruddy, clean-shaven man whose rounded, well-developed jaw was amply balanced by the breadth of brow, hair that was definitely gray and rather thin, eyes whose glance was sharp, shrewd and good-humored, and a smile that opened over white and regular teeth. It was Mr. Quentin Quayne.

"Mr. Creighton?" The voice was unexpectedly pleasant.

My acknowledgment of the fact was all but obliterated by the sudden sharp ring of the telephone on his desk.

"Excuse me for a moment," he said, as he picked up the receiver and listened. "Gordon? . . . . Yes?" He gestured me to an adjacent chair.

I seated myself, and with a pumping heart profited by this temporary diversion of his interest to study a little more closely the man who held, though he knew it not, the continuation of my existence in his hands. The first full-face impression was one of intellectual power tempered by geniality; he might have been an urbane university professor. In profile, the silhouette backed that intellectual power by an almost startling force of character. As he listened at that telephone, the weighty thrust of his brows over the large, broad-nostriled nose, the sharp, clean curve from the compression of his lips to the jutting chin, were dynamic. It was the Napoleonic profile of swift decision and implacable prosecution of purpose. It awed me, and at the same time knocked the last spark of hope out of me. This embodiment of ruthless efficiency would give short shrift to my vague talents.

hed Duke

Illustrated by
Frederic R. Gruger



"Good," he said. "The lounge of the Ritz—and Stevenson wearing a white rose in his buttonhole?"

The colloquy was short and sharp. "Good," he said into the telephone. "The lounge of the Ritz—third table from the entrance—and Stevenson is wearing a white rose in his buttonhole? Right! We'll have him in five minutes. Don't lose sight of him till it's all over."

He put back the receiver just long enough to break the connection, picked it up again and asked for a number.

"Hello!" he called. "Is that Sebright? . . . . Quayne speaking. . . . . We've got your man for you, Sebright. . . . . Yes, Dumonnier himself. You wont recognize him in his disguise, but he is at this moment sitting with one of my men in the lounge of the Ritz, third table from the entrance. My man is wearing a white rose in his buttonhole. You'll take them both, of course—but be careful not to hurt my chap if there's a scuffle. Your bird carries an automatic, by the way. And all the necessary evidence is in the office here if you'll send round for it. Right! . . . . What? . . . . Give your orders first, and I'll hold the line for you. Minutes are precious." Mr. Quentin Quayne sat patiently waiting for a moment or two, the receiver to his ear. Then he spoke again. "Hello! Yes? . . . . You've sent off the flying squad? Good! What did you want to talk about? . . . . Oh! What name? . . . . The Duke of—what? . . . . Duke of Berrisford. All right. You've sent him along? All right. I'll see him."

He put down the receiver and turned to me with a smile. "That's Sebright of Scotland Yard. We've caught a prize bird for him. You remember the fellow who drove a motorcar into Throgmorton Street one Stock Exchange Settling Day, parked it outside a broker's office, and went for a walk round the corner while the bomb he left in the car exploded? He picked up a couple of hundred thousand pounds' worth of securities from the pavement,—on Settling Day the street is full of clerks carrying bonds to bearer in blue canvas bags, you know—tossed them into another car waiting in Bartholomew Lane and was off into space before the panic stopped and the merely stunned had picked themselves out of the casualties. The police of two continents have been after him for three months. We've found him for them. I had a theory—and it has turned out right." He smiled at me again.

"But the police get all the credit for it, I suppose?" I ventured, emboldened by the reassuring geniality of this confidence.

"'Acting on information received,'" he quoted the conventional formula at me with a twinkle of his shrewd eyes. I found myself decidedly liking Mr. Quentin Quayne. There was a magnetism about the man. "But we're not greedy for publicity. Quite the contrary. We obey the poet's precept, Mr. Creighton—'Do good by stealth and blush to find it fame.' In fact, we should do considerably more than blush. We should be very angry—and to some purpose. We don't strut under the spotlight in this business."

He smiled at me, and I suddenly had the distinct impression that I was being given my first lesson in the code Mr. Quentin Quayne laid down for his employees—and simultaneously I realized with even greater distinctness, that those smiling eyes were probing, as it were, through the flesh and blood of the countenance I turned to them, to the incorporeal soul of me underneath. Clear though was my conscience, the feeling was uncomfortable. It was a sort of psychic nakedness, highly disconcerting. One waited, with an instinctive little dread, lest the smile should die out of those eyes. But the smile persisted, reassuringly.

"And now to your affairs, Mr. Creighton."

"I'm afraid you will find that I have small qualifications other than willingness and loyalty, Mr. Quayne," I said desperately. The memory of those searching eyes—they were harmlessly smiling now—abided with me; I was terrified of even appearing to pretend to qualities I did not possess.

He got up from his chair, and as he went across the room, I was surprised to see that he was a much shorter man than he had appeared when sitting in his chair. The great breadth of his shoulders had given me the impression of a man over six feet in height; he was not more than five feet nine. He stopped at a cabinet on the opposite wall, opened a drawer, took out a *dossier*, came back with it to his desk, seated himself and for a moment or two studied the papers he had fetched. He looked up at me sharply.

"You are the Creighton who caught Waffenheim, the female impersonator spy, in May, 1918?" he asked.

I admitted that I was.

"H'm!" The little grunt was enigmatic. "We were on his track ourselves. You beat us by a short head. Not often that happens. My congratulations, Mr. Creighton."

Although not quite sure whether there was not a touch of irony in this curtly uttered felicitation, a faint glow of hope went warm in me. He turned and contemplated me.

"So," he said, with a sudden amused twist of his mouth, "you purposed shooting yourself if I turned you down?"

I almost jumped from my chair. The explosion of an infernal machine under it would scarcely have startled me more.

"It—it was that or the workhouse," I stammered. "But I can't imagine how you knew." My desperate resolve had been, in fact, a secret between me and my own soul.

HE smiled. "My dear lad, you told me yourself." I stared at him, bewildered. "Study faces all day and every day," he went on. "Learn to read the signs. Everybody, of course, constantly and automatically draws vague deductions from the faces that he meets; but few do it consciously, deliberately and scientifically. You will be surprised to find how much they tell you. It is a matter of the trained eye. You can take it as an axiom that no thought, no emotion, passes through the mind without sending at least a quiver through the muscles that would be set in action if that thought or emotion were given complete expression—and few, if any, that do not directly or correlatively affect the muscles of the face. Darwin will give you the groundwork of the subject." He paused and regarded me with that smile I now felt to be cruelly ironic.

"It is still incredible to me," I said rather feebly, "how you could have deduced what—what was in my mind."

He leaned back in his chair.

"Quite easy," he replied. "A simple synthesis of plain indications, facial and otherwise. I saw at a glance when you entered this room that you were near the end of your resources and that you were desperately anxious to get this job. Your face was pale, but your eyes were bright with excitement, and your hands trembled slightly—obvious anxiety. As to your financial condition, your appearance was neat enough, but I could distinctly smell benzine—if, like myself, you neither smoke nor drink you will find that your senses of taste and smell can be educated to a surprising acuteness—and as you moved your hat, the odor was reinforced. Young men of your public-school upbringing do not clean their hats with benzine before applying for a job unless times are pretty bad; they buy a new hat. Also you wore neither watch and chain nor wrist-watch, and to an ex-officer a wrist-watch is nearly as habitual as his collar. There were half a dozen other corroborative little signs which helped me to an almost instantaneous certainty that you were down to your last coin. Do you see?"

"Yes, I see," I said. I don't know that I did see. I was overwhelmed in a misery of humiliation, and my mouth was dry with the dread of the rejection which I foresaw. Mr. Quayne was not at all the sort of man to employ potential suicides.

But he went on in the impersonal tone of a professor elucidating a theorem.

"I continued to observe you while I telephoned, although not looking at you directly. With practice, you will be surprised to find how much one can see out of the corner of one's eyes. You, of course, were off your guard, only concerned with trying to get an idea of me, and I saw an involuntary frown suddenly corrugate your brow and an expression of pain come into your eyes. Your jaw set hard, and the muscle at the hinge stood out a little—it is automatic with a sudden tense determination. Your right hand lay on your knee, with the fingers flexed in the loose way that indicates a withdrawal of conscious attention from them. I saw the forefinger slightly detach itself from the others, crook itself, and contract almost imperceptibly. It was the ghost of the action which pulls the trigger. You were unaware of it, of course. Simultaneously, probably also without knowing it, you sighed deeply—that intake of more oxygen with which a man stimulates his nervous centers in contemplation of a difficult deed. It is true, you might have been contemplating an attack on me. But when a man harbors an aggressive thought, you will almost invariably see a slight upward quiver of the upper lip, the ghost of the muscular action with which our primitive ancestors uncovered the canine teeth they used as an auxiliary weapon. Your mouth, on the contrary, was slightly depressed at the corners, forming that double furrow from the base of the nostrils which is the antithesis of the instinctive expression of aggressiveness and therefore denotes a renunciation of the will to assert one's existence. Consequently, I deduced that the threatening thought in your mind was directed at yourself and no one else—as, in fact, you have admitted."

"You make me feel like a blind man, Mr. Quayne," I said. "I should never have the acuteness to make such subtle deductions, easy though they sound when you explain them."

He shrugged his broad shoulders as he smiled at me.

"Practice makes perfect," he replied. "But I did not take you through this little analysis to make a parade of my own acumen or to humiliate you by exposing your distress. I did it to prove conclusively to you, once for all, how much the perceptive faculties can be sharpened by continual and instructed exercise. Scientific observation of humanity is the firm basis on which all our work here is founded. I do not mean that for the innumerable and infinitely varied problems brought to us for solution we employ no other methods than that of physiognomical deduction. Far from it. We employ every method known to science, backed by a highly organized and unusually complete intelligence service. Circumstantial evidence is often the only evidence available. But ultimately we come back always to the human factor. You cannot know too much about it. Study, in every moment of your spare time, the works of the great modern psychologists—Freud, Jung, Jastrow, Prince and the rest—as well as those of the scientific criminologists such as Bertillon, Gross, Reiss and many others. You will find them all in the library here. Study them until the human mind, in all its complex potentialities, is as familiar to you as the physiology, normal and abnormal, of the human body is familiar to the physician called upon to make a diagnosis. In this office we have one essential axiom: *'Mind is the only ultimate reality, of which material circumstances are the shadow.'* Never forget it in the course of your work here. It is the key to all the problems which will come before you."

"In the course of your work here!" The phrase echoed in me like a peal of joy-bells, wild with the sudden surge of blood to my head. Yet I could scarcely credit its plain meaning.

"You—you mean—you engage me, sir?" I stammered.

He smiled, his strong face pleasantly benevolent. I have never known a man whose eyes could inspire at will such extremes of panic, terror or utter confidence in the person at whom he looked. I felt that I was his slave for life if he would have me.

"Yes," he said, "—on probation. Until further orders, you will occupy that desk there." He pointed to a table desk a little way across the room. "I shall ask you to coöperate in some of my personal work for a time. I train my young men myself. We'll see what we can make of you. You are ready to start at once?"

"This very moment, if you wish, sir." I had to keep a tight hand on the delirious joy which seethed in me. It was *reprieve!*

"Good. There's your desk, then. And you can put back this jacket, under 'W,' in the cabinet there."

I did so, and then, for the first time, sat down in the seat that was to become so familiar to me.

THERE was a tap at the door, and a young woman entered. Mr. Quayne looked up at her.

"Ah, Veronica," he said. "What is it?"

"This has just come in, Chief," she replied, in a quiet, efficient-sounding voice, as she handed him a typewritten letter headed—as I could see from my desk—*'Compagnie Internationale des Wagon-Lits.'*

He scrutinized the document with a little frown of concentrated attention.

"Robbery on the Simplon-Orient," he said. "Looks like our old friend Markinovitch, doesn't it? The old gang and the old methods. Telegraph full details to Watkins at Constantinople, Sergeantson at Belgrade, and Hammond at Milan."

"The telegrams are all ready, Chief," she replied. "I thought of Markinovitch myself and have suggested him as a probable man."

"Good," he said. "Send off the telegrams. I don't think this is beyond the men on the spot. Anyway, we'll let them try their hand. —Oh, Veronica," he added, as she moved away, "let me introduce our new recruit—Mr. Creighton."

She turned and looked at me. She was tall and dark, and as I rose in politeness from my seat, I thought I had rarely seen a more beautiful woman, or one more frigid. Despite Mr. Quayne's recent lesson, to me her features and her eyes were utterly inscrutable in their deliberate banishment of all expression. She



"Good heavens, yes!" he cried. "There was twenty thousand pounds in bearer securities."

regarded me with a cold detachment that was slightly disconcerting, and then, after just the faintest inclination of her head in recognition of my existence, resumed her way out of the room.

"That is Miss Satterthwaite," said Mr. Quayne, when she had closed the door behind her. "A very remarkable young woman. When in doubt, go to her, if I'm not available."

The telephone bell upon his desk rang as he spoke. He took up the receiver.

"Yes? . . . . The Duke of Berrisford? . . . . Show him in, please."

A minute or so later the door opened, and a clerk introduced a tall, thin man in morning-coat, and with white spats over his patent-leather shoes, who removed his silk hat in well-bred courtesy as he entered.

"Mr. Quentin Quayne?" he said in a somewhat high-pitched voice, coming across the room and holding out his hand with a nervous eagerness.

"Quite at your service," replied Mr. Quayne genially, shaking hands with his visitor. "Mr. Creighton, will you be good enough to pull up a chair for His Grace?"



I did so, and His Grace seated himself with the abrupt jerkiness of a man whose nerves are at strain. He was a man of between forty-five and fifty. Viewing him at close quarters, I could see that his somewhat bulbous eyes were bloodshot and that the lower lip of a rather flaccid mouth was quivering under his drooping mustache and little pointed beard. The gray-hued haggardness of his face was eloquent of lack of sleep.

Mr. Quentin Quayne settled himself back in his own chair. "And now, sir, what can I do for you?" he asked with a smile. "I trust you do not mind the presence of my assistant?"

The Duke of Berrisford ignored my existence. For answer, he extracted a folded paper from his breast pocket. His long, aristocratically white hand shook as he passed it across to Mr. Quayne. "I received that last night," he said in a strained voice.

Mr. Quayne opened it. On the sheet of paper was the life-size imprint in red ink of a human hand, and underneath, in crudely printed capitals, were the words: "IN THIRTY-SIX HOURS—EXIT THE DUKE OF BERRISFORD."

Q. Q.—I may as well begin to call him by the name by which all of us in the Q. Q. Agency think of him, though we generally address him as "the Chief"—glanced up at his visitor.

"Do you attach any serious importance to this?" he asked.

"I do—I do indeed," replied the Duke. The earnestness in his voice was unmistakable.

Q. Q. contemplated the paper again, skeptically.

"It looks to me like a silly schoolboy hoax," he said. "May I ask why you attach importance to it?"

"I—I can't tell you," stammered the Duke. "I—I can't explain—but I *feel*"—he emphasized the word—"that it has a most sinister significance. I am afraid—terribly afraid—I could not sleep all last night."

"H'm!" Mr. Quentin Quayne's keen eyes rested for a moment on the Duke's pallid face, and I wondered what they read in it. "You have no specific reason for believing this to be a genuine threat from any quarter—a terrorist organization, for example?"

"No—no specific reason; only—what shall I say?—an intuition, an instinctive feeling which is beyond reason. Mr. Quayne, I am frightened to the marrow of my bones! I have a presentiment which amounts almost to certainty that in a few hours I shall be no more." The tremulous sincerity in the man's voice impressed me not a little. There was something almost pathetic in his tone as he added: "But I am afraid you scoff at mere presentiments, Mr. Quayne."

Mr. Quentin Quayne's face was impenetrable.

"I have too much experience to scoff at anything," he replied. "A presentiment may be founded on very good reasons which, for one cause or another, remain outside consciousness. May I ask if there is any idea—no matter how apparently unreasonable—which occurs spontaneously to you in association with the thought of this piece of paper?" He held it up.

"Yes," said the Duke promptly. "Russia."

"Russia? Yes, I suppose that is the natural association. Have you ever had any dealings with Russia or Russians?"

"No." The Duke shook his head emphatically. "Although, as a matter of fact, my mother was a Russian lady,—she died when I was an infant,—I have not only never been to Russia, but as far as I am aware, I have never come into contact with any Russians in my life."

"And you can conceive of no reason why a Russian terrorist organization should threaten you?"

"Except that I have identified myself rather prominently with



"Where do you sleep?" queried the Chief, turning sharply to the valet. "At the top of the house, sir," was the reply. "I heard no sound during the night."

anti-revolutionary propaganda in this country." The Duke of Berrisford was, in fact, as I remembered, well-known for his vigorous association with the High Tory party.

"Quite." Q. Q. nodded acceptance of the hypothesis implied. "And you received this last night—by post?"

"Yes—by the last post. Here is the envelope." The Duke took it from his pocket and passed it across the desk.

The Chief scrutinized the envelope and postmark. It was addressed in the same crude capitals as the words it had contained.

"Posted in Southwest One," he remarked. He held it up to the light, examined the quality of the paper. "A very cheap, ordinary envelope, but my laboratory may be able to bring out finger-prints upon it. Unfortunately, there will probably be many —the postman and the sorters as well as those of your servant and your own. Still, we'll try. We may get a clue to the sender that way. I suppose Sebright couldn't identify the finger-prints on the inclosure? They're plain enough."

"I am afraid Mr. Sebright did not try," said the Duke, with a self-conscious hesitation. "In fact, he rather laughed at me. He thinks, as you do, that it is merely a stupid hoax. But I made him promise to have my house watched tonight. And then, as I was still not quite satisfied, he sent me on to you. He said you were the man to know if there were anything in it."

"Much obliged," smiled the Chief. "Well, frankly, I think there is not. It looks to me like a poor practical joke. Would-be assassins do not usually make us a present of their finger-prints in this generous manner. My sober opinion is that you can make your mind quite easy. Anyway, the protection of Sebright's men should be quite sufficient if—improbably, as I think—anyone should be contemplating mischief to you. But you might leave me this,"—he held up the piece of paper with the imprint of the hand,—"and we'll make an effort to identify the gentleman who has virtually signed his name on it. I'm afraid I can't do more than that," he concluded smilingly.

"Thank you," said the Duke, rising from his chair. "If I am alive tomorrow morning, I will ring you up and tell you that there is no further need to worry. I feel—I can't explain why—that if I survive the time-limit written on that paper, I shall be quite safe."

"Then I shall confidently expect you to ring me up," said Mr. Quayne, extending his hand in farewell. "Mr. Creighton, will you see His Grace to the lift?"

When I returned, I found the Chief poring over the pages of Debrett.

"A piece of malicious humor in my opinion," he said, smiling up at me. "Some one who doesn't like His Ducal Highness' politics giving him a bit of a scare. But we'll just look him up in the book. Dukes with Russian mothers are not common. . . . . Here we are. 'Alfred Geoffrey—fifth duke—born 1877—eldest son of Lord Clavering and Tatia Muranoff, daughter of—educated Berne, Bonn—succeeded third cousin in default of direct heir, 1906—unmarried.' H'm. That doesn't tell us much," he said, closing the book, "except that our friend probably never expected one day to be Duke of *(Continued on page 140)*

We printed in the April issue a story by Grace Mason that we thought remarkable. And within a month our judgment was indorsed in an unusual way. An old American college ordered several dozen copies of that issue. Later, the Professor of English wrote that he desired the copies for use as textbooks in the study of Mrs. Mason's story.



"Margie O'Day," she said to the young girl in the mirror, "you're going out, and you're not coming back till your luck has changed."

By

Grace Sartwell Mason

Illustrated by R. M. Crosby

Leave

FOR her, for Margie O'Day of the dauntless career, the zero hour had come, and she knew it. She knew it the instant Schulman began to stutter, and her hand on the telephone receiver turned icy cold.

"But Mr. Schulman, Leo Benning himself said that 'Leonora' might have been written for me! You heard him. You know he gave me the part to read a month ago. Both of you—you as well as he—advised me to stick around. Why, I turned down the lead in a Number One company, for *Leonora*. Why—why—I don't understand—"

Into her ear the voice of Schulman clattered, explaining, consoling, but offering no help. She broke in upon it desperately:

"But you never told me that Leo Benning had an angel. Why didn't you? I could have gone to him—I can go to him yet. Who is he? No use? How can you say it's no use, Mannie Schulman! What? He says I haven't got—what?—emotional power? Oh, your grandmother, Mannie! Has he ever seen me act? No? Well, then, how can he say I haven't got emotional power? Who is this man Zolnay, anyway?"

Her face whitened as she listened. She tried to tell herself Schulman was mistaken, but in her heart she knew she had lost the fattest rôle of her career. Her knowledge of theatrical "angels" was shrewd and melancholy. They were notoriously interfering and prejudiced. And an angel was generally all-powerful, as well as stupid. For the whimsical word of a man named Zolnay, who had never seen her, she had lost a chance to open on Broadway in a part that exactly suited her. It was the hardest blow she had ever received. She thrust the telephone away from her, stood for an instant with clenched hands, then flung herself prone upon the bed.

She had had disappointments before, many of them. Indeed,



The girl held up a restraining hand. "No, no," she said, "I cannot let you. I cannot begin that way."

It to Margie

her short life could only have been expressed by a zigzag line of ups and downs, a few sharp peaks of success, many mere bread-and-butter levels, here and there a dip into despair. But this was the deepest valley of all her valleys. In fact, it was a well, bottomless and black. And little Margie, going down for the third time, ceased even to kick out. She tucked her head under the coverlet of orchid satin and let herself drown.

It was autumn, a melancholy afternoon, and the light in the room began to fade early. The far-off surf-roar of Broadway crossed a block, climbed ten stories, and filled the room with its sense of a crowd. It penetrated even under the satin and down that covered Margie O'Day's head. It sent a knife through her drowning heart; she stirred, cast back the coverlet, and a salt tear trickled into her ear.

"Alone," she sobbed, "and a flop! A hopeless Brodie—I wish I was dead."

But at this mournful phrase her tears checked themselves; a superstitious terror stirred within her. "No, I take it back, cross my heart!"

For her mother had often said: "Never wish you were dead, Margie, for God might take you up, and then where would you be? Besides, you can never tell what's around the next corner. Remember, there's always the next corner."

Margie sat up, threw off the coverlet, shook back her hair and mopped her eyes. She became aware of the drab twilight. The twilight hour, so beloved of poets, is not for the Margies of the world. It reminds them of the security they have not, the peace they seldom know, the friends who have forgotten them, the lamps that are lit in homes. No! No twilight for Margie, please!

She sprang across the floor, shivering, and turned on a light over the dressing-table. It was an electric bulb disguised as an orchid. Practically everything in the room was disguised as something else. Dolls with chiffon skirts smirked everywhere, concealing such objects of utility as an electric curler, a telephone, a powder-box, a bedside lamp, a Little Darling washboard, a jar of strawberry jam. Dreadful dolls with spidery legs hit you between the eyes with their dreadfulness. Cushions of mauve

velvet and gold lace tripped you up. In bed one smothered under a canopy of Oriental brocades. In the bathroom were strange Japanese perfume-burners, and flagons of green waters, tied with mauve satin bows, slightly bedraggled. Fillets of doubtful authenticity covered numberless small pillows, the dressing-table, the chair-backs. Under the bed were three empty violet boxes, a frayed satin slipper, a forgotten bundle of laundry, a failure of a hat spurned by a spirited foot.

It was all slightly dusty. It smelled of *quelques fleurs* and benzine. Margie hated the room violently. It made her long more than ever for that stark white cleanliness which, through eight years of second-class hotel bedrooms, sleeping cars and theater dressing-rooms, had become her unattainable ideal. She kicked a dog-basket out of the way, and then apologized. She must not be ungrateful to Dolly Van Ingen, who had let her use these rooms when she had been obliged, temporarily, to leave her trunks in the hands of a landlady possessing more business sense than milk of human kindness.

But nevertheless she hated them. A dreadful sense of homesickness came over her, which was absurd, for she could not remember ever having had a home. Sometimes, before her mother died, when both of them could get a vacation at the same time, and could afford it, they had spent a few weeks at some farmhouse, and lying under orchard trees they had deliciously imagined they owned the place and were at home. And sometimes, in a hotel bedroom on a Sunday afternoon when there was no jump to be made to the next town, they had spread a white cloth on top of a trunk, taken out the two blue-and-white teacups and the alcohol lamp, and called it home.

But a real home she could not remember. During these past weeks when it seemed as if *Leonora* was certainly to be hers, she had let herself cautiously dream. If the play "went"—and it was bound to "go," for its author had already four successes to his credit—she meant first of all to have a little apartment. And it would be clean, clean! And high up, so as to catch the sunlight! And when she came back to it at night, she could close the door behind her and it would be home.

That was over now, though. No use thinking about it. But there was one thing she must think out: why was she taking this disappointment so hard? She had lost equally good parts before and her spirit had never dipped its flag. Why, then, was she going to pieces like this, now?

She sat down and leaned her elbows on the powdery dressing-table. The mirror showed her a face smeared with tears, and two reddened eyes questioning her. And from that mirror the truth leaped out and hit her between the eyes. Youth—she was losing it. That first careless, unbeatable thing had left her.

"But I'm only twenty-six," she whispered. "Well, almost twenty-seven. But I've never been sick. I can work as hard as ever; I can make up for eighteen and you wouldn't know—It's the life that does it—"

She had come down to the grim truth now. For eight years she had worked hard at a profession that is merciless to youth. Up and down and across the continent she had traveled in companies, good and bad, in vaudeville, on location in the pictures, even, at first, in the chorus of musical comedies. One winter when every show on the road was crashing, she had demonstrated a complexion clay in a string of department stores from Chicago to Portland, Oregon. She had played the saxophone in a Lyceum Bureau "sister" orchestra and waded through the snowdrifts of Minnesota to do it. And eight times she had come within a hair's-breadth of a Broadway opening.

No wonder some of the resilience of youth was gone. And in place of it what had she? A lodging for the night lent her by a careless hand, everything she owned in the world in possession of her late landlady, and engagements as scarce as shade in the desert. The tears started afresh, but she set her teeth.

"No use turning on the tap, Margie, old dear! What you've got to do is to pull yourself together and use your bean. You've never failed to pull yourself out of a hole, and why flop now? Let us then be up and doing, up and doing, Margie, dear—"

SHE wiped her eyes. Then she emptied onto the dressing-table the entire contents of a beaded bag. Aside from various essentials to a quick refurbishing of the complexion, there were nineteen cents and a dollar bill.

"Glad it isn't a two," sighed Margie, wrapping the bill around the silver. "I've had bad luck enough for one day."

Then she took a hot bath and a cold shower, and sitting again under the orchidaceous light, she restored her complexion to a springlike freshness out of Dolly's innumerable little jars. She brushed and coiled her shining hair, tinted her pearly fingernails, delicately darkened her long lashes, pulled on over her head the straight little serge frock, pulled down over her hair the close little hat, and stood in front of the mirror. She looked like clear-eyed twenty in from Scarsdale for tea at the Ritz.

"Margie O'Day," she said to the young girl in the mirror, "you're going out now, and you're not coming back till your luck has changed. 'Cause if you do, you're in for a bad night, and tomorrow maybe it wont be so easy to do a nip-up. All the time, it gets harder and harder—"

She broke off with a shiver. Then she gave her shoulders a shake, assured herself that her mascot, a china dog the length of her smallest fingernail, with one leg broken, was on the job at the bottom of the bead bag, and murmuring, "Leave it to Margie," stepped lightly out.

BROADWAY at five of an autumn afternoon—the electric signs springing out against the smoke-blue shadows, the matinée mobs melting away at each cross-street, taxicabs cruising for fares, out of stage doors fortunate ones in new furs stepping, at the corners the unhappy disengaged explaining how it happened.

Upon these tides Margie cast herself. There was no course charted for her, but it was part of her code to look as if there were.

"Hello, Edna, dear! Congratulations! I hear the show's turning 'em away. Me? Oh, perfectly top-hole, darling, but so busy—just on my way now to read a part for the Schulmans. Good-by, old thing—I must dash along."

She walked with great briskness for a block, and then slowed. The bead bag hung limp in her hand. One dollar and nineteen cents and a broken-legged dog! Not much of a raft on this hungry sea. And talk about being hungry—a dollar and nineteen cents judiciously expended would buy three meals. On the other hand, a dollar and nineteen cents would buy tea at the Lester. And after five at the Lester, one often met Morrie or the Schulmans, or even little Kransky, who had signed her for many a season in stock. And besides, if this was her last meal, why not have it amidst glitter and cheer?

"Sufficient unto the day—" she murmured, and climbed the steps of the Lester. Threading her way brightly adown the crowded alleys, she had the appearance of one with an important rendezvous. But she met no one of her own world, and finally she drifted up to the mezzanine. The dressing-rooms were full of chatter and success, and such a menagerie of furs that she shivered and felt a tear gathering behind her eyelids. She went out from there hastily and stepped down a little side corridor to wipe her eyes.

It was an inconspicuous corridor, having only one door and that covered by a velvet hanging. As she stood there a page came along, brushed aside the velvet curtain and knocked. Just above his hand she read the word *"Private,"* and underneath it a name that made her stare: *"Mr. Zolnay."*

The name rang a bell in her memory so sharply that she almost sprang forward to knock on the door herself. Zolnay—could this be Leo Benning's angel? Quickly she backed out of the little corridor and sat herself down on a velvet couch to think. Zolnay—Zolnay—what had she heard about him? Suddenly she hit her knee a thump. She had it. Zolnay was the mysterious millionaire hotel-owner about whom rumor had been busy in agents' offices and around the theaters for months. The advent of a new angel had not concerned her, and if she had ever heard his name mentioned, it had escaped her memory. But the detail that he owned or managed hotels she recalled clearly.

"And he said I wasn't good enough for *Leonora!*" she breathed, a glitter coming into her eyes. "He sits behind that velvet curtain and spoils the best opening I ever had—without ever having seen me act. It isn't right, or decent, or—or anything. But isn't that just like an angel?"

As anger rose in her, her toes crinkled with desire to march into Mr. Zolnay's lair and tell him exactly what she thought of him. But years of earning a living in the most ticklish of all professions had disciplined little Margie O'Day. She ground her teeth and sat still. And in a moment or two her stormy eyes began to clear, to gleam. In their lovely dark-blue depths an intense thoughtfulness grew. She leaned her chin in her cupped hand and fixing her eyes upon the velvet curtain, she gave herself over to meditation.

It was a moment or two later that the velvet curtain was brushed aside and out came a brisk young woman attired in street-clothes—evidently a secretary, through for the day, for a



"If you were offered a marriage," he stammered, "that would give you ease, would you accept it?"

few steps away from the door she stopped a second page boy, took from his silver tray a card and then flipped it firmly back again.

"No use taking that in," she said. "He wont see anyone. He's in conference till six or later."

Margie O'Day stood up. In her agile brain a magnificent project had been born—in the instant between the appearance of the young woman and her disappearance down the stairs! It stirred the imagination of Margie O'Day like potent wine; her eyes were brilliant with an imp in each of them.

Down the stairs she stepped quickly. Into the famous Etruscan room of the Lester she hastened.

"Give me," she said to the head waiter, "a table near the door. I expect a friend."

Near at hand was a seductive horseshoe draped with snowy damask and etched with smilax, and on it like jewels were plates of tiny cakes, heaps of sandwiches, silver chafing dishes and steaming urns. Margie looked at it, and her little tongue moistened her lips.

"If I'm bound for the hoosegow, I'll have my tummy full of good things, anyway. Waiter! Lobster *pâté* and anchovy sandwiches. Some of that Lady Baltimore cake and a pot of chocolate with whipped cream. Oh, dear me! How small those *pâtés* are! Two lobster *pâtés*, waiter, and be quick, please."

Underneath the tablecloth her hand slipped into the bead bag. One dollar and nineteen cents and a broken-legged dog!

"Lie still, darlings," she whispered. "I know you can't pay for this. Leave it to Margie."

JUST before she finished the last morsel of the Lady Baltimore cake, she took an apparently careless survey of the room. It was as she had expected. Her waiter was nowhere in sight. The head waiter was bowing before a party on the other side of the room. Every table was full, every waiter busy to distraction; the orchestra agitated the air into confusion; girls were jumping up to wave to one another; men were roaming from table to table.

Margie slid out of her chair gracefully, languidly looked over the room—and languidly strolled out.

When ten minutes later the waiter came along with her finger-bowl, there was nothing but a morsel of cake on a plate and a napkin in a chair. He stared and then hurried across to the head waiter.

But at this moment Margie was standing in front of a secluded mirror in the dressing-room on the mezzanine. Her flying fingers passed deftly over her face, and when she again turned around, she wore a most interesting *Camille*-like pallor. Under her large, wistful eyes were delicate lilac shadows. But her lips—a phenomenon noticeable more often on the stage than in life—remained becomingly crimson. Her eyes needed no brightening, for they were brilliant with nervousness. Quietly and quickly she stepped across the mezzanine, slipped into the little corridor, and held aside the velvet curtain that veiled the name of Mr. Zolnay. Her heart was pounding furiously as it always did on a first night in a new part. Indeed, she felt exactly as if she were listening for a cue. Drawing a long breath, she put her hand on the doorknob, opened the door, and closed it softly behind her. *(Continued on page 98)*



Illustrated by Frank Schoonover

The Valley

It's rare for an author to be highly pleased with the illustrations to his fiction, but George Marsh grows really enthusiastic over Frank Schoonover's pictures for this, his much-discussed novel of wilderness life. "His illustrations are so true and so vivid," says Mr. Marsh, "that I get from them almost the same thrill I do in the actual North country itself."

The Story So Far:

TO the fur-trading post at Wailing River came Brent Steele, explorer for the American Museum. He found the shadow of fear upon everyone—upon the factor St. Onge, upon his beautiful daughter Denise, upon the Indian hunters.

For the fur canoe, which carried the year's catch from St. Onge at Wailing River to his superior Lascelles at the Albany headquarters, had seemingly vanished from the face of the river after its first camp beyond St. Onge's post. This meant ruin to St. Onge, for he had with difficulty maintained his post against an unscrupulous free trader named Laflamme, who won the trade of the Indians with illicit whisky.

The loss of the fur meant disaster to Denise St. Onge also, for both Laflamme and Lascelles courted her, and toward both she felt justifiable dislike. But her aged father was in the power of his superior Lascelles—who now could and would turn St. Onge adrift penniless if Denise denied him further.

To the Indians the loss of the fur canoe meant another thing—destruction by the evil spirits, the "Windigo," which they believed had made away with the canoe and its boatmen. Strange tracks had been found in the forest, and unearthly outcries had resounded at night.

Steele's factotum David and St. Onge's man Michel were sent on another search for the missing fur canoe, but they returned without finding trace of it. However, on a trip to the neigh-

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With the bloodhound at the tail of the sled, day after day the dog-team hurried into the North.

of Voices

By George Marsh

boring Big Feather Lake, Steele found the body of an Indian, strangely mutilated, lying near the river bank.

And now came a letter from Laflamme, the free trader, urging his suit for Denise—and threatening that if she did not marry him, St. Onge would "never see the ice break up on the Wailing." But his equally undesired rival Lascelles did better—himself appeared at Wailing River; and presently Denise, in evident distress, told Steele of her engagement to him. The American, however, won from her a promise to delay matters till spring, and then started south with his collections, planning to return with the winter, and to track down the mysterious Windigo in the snow.

At Ogoké, Steele was received with veiled suspicion by the fur-trader Laflamme. The woman Rose, introduced to Steele as Laflamme's "sister," made love to the American and came to his cabin that night, begging him to take her away with him. Laflamme appeared, and was knocked out by David, who found their effects had been searched. Fearing for their lives, Steele and David departed at once. They were waylaid at the Frying Pan rapids by Laflamme's emissaries, and only escaped by running the hazardous "white water." *(The story continues in detail:)*

AS the backwaters of the rivers and the coves of the lakes were nightly icing over in the increasing bite of the frost, and the first norther from the great bay stripped the last leaves from birch and poplar, driving laggard rearguards of armies of the gray and snowy geese in raucous retreat from the succulent goose-grass of the freezing marshes, two pinch-faced *voyageurs* raced the winter southward to Nepigon House.

For a week they had traveled on half-rations eked out with an occasional pike or doré which had been lured with much patience from their winter lethargy; but each morning as they took in their belts and ruefully surveyed the fading food-supply, Steele had reiterated: "You can't starve two men who've run the Frying Pan."

Then followed silent hours of paddling in which the thoughts of David centered largely on the future consumption of savory

moose-steaks at Nepigon House, while for Steele, heart-hunger and the necessity for an early solution of the problem at Wailing River had served as an anodyne to his craving for food.

Another week, and Steele was hurrying east on the Canadian Pacific. Arriving in New York and reporting at the Museum, he readily obtained permission to follow up this most amazing example of the abnormal in the habits of Canadian mammals, inextricably involved with Indian superstition in so baffling a manner as to defy any ordinary methods of solution. But at home he met objection to an early return to the North.

"My boy, you are away so much," protested his mother. "Why do you go again so soon? I want you to myself for a month or two. I'm sure this zoölogical mystery can wait."

Steele had sketched to his family in the briefest manner his stay at Wailing River, barely mentioning the St. Onges and Laflamme, and attributing to accident the running of the Frying Pan. But when at length dissembling had failed to convince the devoted woman of the necessity for a winter on the snow, he put his arm about her in the seclusion of her room and talked of what was in his heart.

"And she is a lady—a woman of breeding, whom you have found in that lonely valley?" asked the incredulous mother.

"She comes from an old family in Touraine, and has more refinement, more breeding, than anyone I know here—and talent, approaching genius. She'll sacrifice herself—crush that rare heart of hers, unless we can put St. Onge on his feet."

"And you really think you can help the father out of his difficulties?"

"Yes."

"But does she really care for you, Brent?"

"I am not going back, Mother dear, for reward. It is because I care for her. To have that rich nature of hers—the fineness of her, numbed, dwarfed, in a life at a fur post with a man with nothing besides a nose for profits, is unthinkable. She couldn't endure it—she'd kill herself."

Mrs. Steele patted the calloused hand of her son affectionately. "You do love her, boy. And if she does not love you, she will lose the stanchest heart in the world. You make me pity her so, in her terrible position."

"I knew you would understand," he said, smiling at her with her own gray eyes. "And you want me to go back, now that you know?"

"Yes, Brent, I want you to go back."

ON the return westward, Steele made frequent trips to the baggage-car to talk to a long-eared, wrinkled-faced hound.

"If I had had you, old boy, last September, up on Big Feather Lake," he often repeated regretfully, rubbing the ears of the great black-and-tan beast, "there would be one less Windigo in the Wailing River country. I don't know what you can do on the snow. You may freeze in that country, with your short hair, but you're surely going to have a chance to help us out when we lose a trail. The huskies haven't got your nose, and wont hold to a trail as you will. And when that foghorn bay of yours booms out over the hills, there's going to be a general scramble for cover among the beasts and devils that hear it."

The bloodhound, trained in the Tennessee hills, had arrived in New York in response to an urgent telegram from Steele to a friend who bred the man-hunters on his Southern plantation. There was no doubt in Steele's mind that the riddle of the Windigo would have been solved in the autumn had he had a bloodhound at Wailing River. But the ability of the southern-bred dog to hold a trail on the strange medium of snow or ice was a matter outside the experience of those he had consulted. However, as there would be no crust until March, daylight tracking would be easy in the new snow. It was for night work, when the absence of shadows obliterated a snow-trail, and when the trail followed wind-swept ice, that Steele had gambled on the sensitive nose of the bloodhound to aid them.

In his wallet he carried a sealed letter of instruction from the Montreal headquarters of the foreign company, addressed to Lascelles at Fort Albany, supplementing orders to be sent with the Christmas mail-packet by the Abbitibi route. But, as he was informed, "business was business," and the payment to the company of the value of the fur lost by St. Onge would not justify the management, against the advice of their inspector at Albany, in keeping the post open, as it had never done well.

At Ottawa, Steele had been assured that a police canoe would be dispatched to Ogoké in the early spring, but that all available men would be on duty elsewhere during the winter, on more pressing matters.

So, as his train carried him west through the white wilderness to Nepigon station, where David was to meet him with the best dog-team obtainable, the problem he faced continued unchanged by his trip to New York. It still remained for Michel, David and himself, unaided, to run down the beast or beasts which had spread terror through the valley of the Wailing, and to hold the Indians on their trap-lines. There was yet the mysterious tragedy at the Devil's Mile to be solved before the taboo would be lifted from the lower river.

AT Nepigon station a five-dog sled, driven by a half-breed, waited in the snow for the passenger with the bloodhound, and only the swift use of David's long caribou-hide whip saved the dazed beast from speedy annihilation by the team of half-wild huskies.

"Hello, David!" cried Steele, keeping his dog at a distance from the white fangs which threatened him. "Are the trails open?"

"De Jackfish been close' onlee few day'. You come back queek, boss," answered the Ojibway, a wide grin furrowing his face.

"We've got plenty of planning to do at Nepigon House before we start. Guess how many shells I've got for your rifle?"

"Wal, I need one for frien' of yours, an' 'noder for bear dat seeng lak de cat—two ees all, I t'ink."

Steele laughed. "Oh, I've got a few more than that for you. You may need moose, or meet some one at the Frying Pan sometime, so I've brought you three hundred. How's the family? Does your wife object to your going?"

"She say she t'ink I got girl down at Wailing Rivière."

Three days of sledding over a good trail, for the snow was not deep, brought the team to Nepigon House at the head of the great Nepigon Lake, which was partly iced over. There, while the bloodhound, wearing a blanket, became somewhat more acclimated to the cold, and the huskies were forcibly taught to respect him as a permanent member of the party, David and Steele made their plans for a campaign on the snow.

With the coming of the first severe November cold, which would seal the swift Jackfish and Rouge, except in the "strong-water," making sled-travel easy to the valley of the Wailing, the two friends started.

Up the Jackfish and down the Rouge, with the bloodhound at the tail of the sled, day after day the dog-team hurried into the North. At Ogoké, to escape the possibility of being seen, they took the opposite shore of the lake, passing the post in the night. And each white mile they put behind them, each camp they made at night, meant to the impatient Steele one mile, one day, nearer the girl who needed them. But as he broke trail ahead of the team, when they cut back from the shore to circle rapids or quick-water, or rode in the easy going of the river ice, the task he had set for himself and his two friends appeared more and more difficult of accomplishment.

There was, however, one ray of light in the gloom of his fear of failure. Michel had definite suspicions which he had promised to share on Steele's return to Wailing River. And as Steele and David nightly sat under their shed tent before a fire in the heart of a spruce thicket, and talked, over after-supper pipes, the optimism of David was so marked that the American knew that the clue which had, for some reason, been kept from him, deeply impressed the Indian.

Chapter Twenty-four

AT last, through the early dusk which shut down on the valley one November afternoon, gleamed the yellow lights of Wailing River.

The pulse of Steele speeded as he made out the blurred shape of the house which Denise St. Onge called home. Minutes now, and they would wring the hands of St. Onge and Michel in the trade-house. She would be in the kitchen with Charlotte, and he would have to wait—wait while his pounding heart beat out the dragging minutes. And later, at the table, while she served them, he would watch the changing expression of her sensitive face, the light and shadow in her hair—unruly hair which brooked no confinement; he saw once more its wind-fluttered beauty as she played her violin on the hilltop. The morning he went away, she had come to him with mist in her eyes. Would they shine again, he wondered, with that new light, now that he had come back to fight for her, or would she freeze into that other self—hold him at a distance because of her quixotic bargain with Lascelles?

Steele opened the door of the trade-house, followed by David.



"We are going at once, mademoiselle. I want you to know, in case anything happens, that I have done what I could."

At their entrance, St. Onge turned in his chair behind the slab counter where he sat in conversation with his head-man.

"Good evening, gentlemen!" The voice of Steele rang in the silent room.

With eyes wide with amazement and surprise, St. Onge slowly rose to his feet, while the lean face of the Iroquois thrust forward, tense, apprehensive, as if he feared a trick of vision.

"*Bonjour*, Michel! W'at you t'ink you see, de Windigo?" And David advanced with outstretched hand.

"We have returned as we promised, monsieur!" added Steele, approaching the counter, behind which the startled men stood staring at the hooded apparitions.

Then, with a yell and a bound, Michel cleared the counter and was hugging the blocky Ojibway.

"By gar! You not drown een de Frying Pan, Daveed? We t'ought you dead men. By damn! I glad to see you, Daveed—and you, m'sieur! All right, bot' you two, beeg an' strong jes de same?" The delighted Michel repeatedly wrung the hands of his amused but perplexed friends. Meanwhile St. Onge had reached Steele.

"*Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!* Monsieur Steele! Welcome to Wailing River!" he exclaimed in a voice strained—unnatural. "Doubly welcome, my dear Steele! We thought we looked at the dead when you entered that door—Michel and I. An Indian brought word that you were lost in the Jackfish rapids, last month. We were hopeless—and now we are overjoyed."

"Thank you, sir. I am glad to be back. We ran the rapids—it's a long tale, Colonel."

St. Onge suddenly started, turning in bewilderment from Steele to Michel. "What was that?" he exclaimed.

David doubled with laughter at the surprise of the Iroquois. Again, to the bewilderment of the Frenchman and his head-man, the bloodhound outside raised a deep-throated protest at the cold and his empty stomach, which initiated a bedlam of howls from the huskies.

"Why, that's Windigo; he's hungry!" laughed Steele. "You'd

"This is a great shaman from the South." Michel pointed to Steele. "He has a dog that hunts the Windigo—he has a magic howl, and the Windigo fears him."



better look after them, David, before the home dogs start a fight."

"That, a dog? It sounded more like a lion, monsieur."

"I've brought a bloodhound to track the Windigo—also to give him a bit of his own medicine. His name is Pete, but David and I call him 'Windigo.' If we'd had him in the fall, it might have been different. But Mademoiselle St. Onge? Is she well?" Steele hastened to ask.

The face of the older man sobered.

"She has not been well," he said pointedly, "since the news came from Ogoké."

"You mean?"

"The news of your drowning in the Frying Pan, monsieur."

Steele thrilled at the words. Then the realization of what it had meant to Denise St. Onge—this blow to her hopes—swiftly saddened him.

"I am sorry—so sorry!" The eyes of the two men met in mutual understanding.

"I will go to her at once," said St. Onge. "The shock would be too great—and the joy," he added. "If you will follow shortly, you will find your old room, such as it is, ready."

At Michel's shack Steele shaved with a hand strangely beyond control. Returning to the trade-room, he found St. Onge waiting for him.

"I trust, sir, that your daughter is well enough to see me—that she will join us at supper?"

"Of course, it was a great shock," replied the smiling Frenchman, "to learn that you were alive, and here—a very great shock, to one of her temperament. But her joy—monsieur, I cannot describe to you her joy. She was singing—actually singing in her room, when I left the house."

Mist filled Steele's eyes—mist which he made no attempt to conceal—at the words of St. Onge. She cared—this rare girl he had found in the forests! Charlotte was right—she cared for him.

In the living-room of the factor's quarters, Denise St. Onge waited for the man returned from the dead.

Entering, Steele went to her and took both her hands.

"I have come back, Denise St. Onge, as I promised," he said. Her dark eyes bravely met his; but the convulsive movement of her lips betrayed the imminence of tears.

"We are—so glad—so glad you are here!" she murmured.

"It is a happy night for Wailing River, monsieur," broke in St. Onge as Steele turned to the factor to permit his daughter to regain her self-control.

"A happier one for me, Colonel!" replied Steele.

Then the smiling face of Charlotte appeared at the door of the dining-room.

"Charlotte! I'm mighty glad to see you!" cried Steele, glad of this release of the tension.

"*Bonjour, bonjour,* M'sieur Steele!" The eyes of the cook narrowed to slits as her expansive mouth widened. "We ver' happee you come back—live, strong man!"

"I am happy to be here, Charlotte." Steele shook the proffered hand of the Indian.

"I got good stew for you. You hongree?"

"You'll find my appetite as good as ever."

At supper St. Onge insisted on hearing of Steele's trip home.

"Before I begin," said Steele, "tell me if Laflamme has shown his hand?"

"No, we have heard nothing. One of his Indians on the way to Albany with a letter told us you had been drowned. That is all."

"When I met him," continued Steele, "he acted cold and suspicious, wanted to know my business, but warmed later, asking me to dine with him and the woman who passes as Rose Laflamme. He became so polite that I was under the impression that he believed my story. After dinner he was suddenly called to the trade-house. One of his men had started to bother David, who, of course, had his eyes open, and David broke some of his fingers. This worried me considerably; it meant leaving on the jump in the morning before there was trouble."

"Did you see any whisky?" asked St. Onge.

"Yes, but I forgot to tell you that there were a number of bush Indians still at the post. He must have six or eight men besides. What he uses them all for is beyond me."

"And this Rose Laflamme, what is she like?" asked Denise.

Steele felt the blood in his face. In spite of the legitimate ends for which he had worked, the episode with Rose Laflamme had left an unsavory taste.

"She is a striking-looking woman, with, I am confident, a strain of Indian blood. It was very evident that she and Laflamme were not on good terms—that she desired to leave Ogoké; in fact, she asked if we would take her to the railroad."



"She asked you, a stranger?" demanded Denise.

"You mean she is held there against her will?" broke in St. Onge.

"Absolutely! But Laflamme, from what she told me, fears she would tell what she knows—inform the authorities."

"What a situation for a woman!" deprecated Denise.

"Yes, she evidently hates him—hinted vaguely at many things, when Laflamme was absent at the trade-house. But the only information I succeeded in getting was that Pierre, the Indian, who came here in September, was sent downriver partly to spread Windigo rumors. David saw him at Ogoké."

"He talked with Tête-Boule, and left shortly after," said St. Onge.

"Oh, by the way, is Tête-Boule, the great sorcerer, still here?"

"Yes, although something happened when Michel came back. They had a long talk one night in Tête-Boule's shack. I heard the trouble from the beach, and found Michel threatening to cut his throat."

"Why did you interfere?" laughed Steele.

"He's been useful as a hunter, and I'm short-handed. But I am interested to hear how you left Ogoké, monsieur, and why you were so reckless as to attempt to run the Frying Pan."

"When I returned to the shack where we had left our bags, I found David repacking some of the stuff. Laflamme had had our baggage searched."

"That's why he invited you to dinner."

"Yes, that is one reason." Steele did not say that the other was to talk of Denise.

"Did you accuse him of it?"

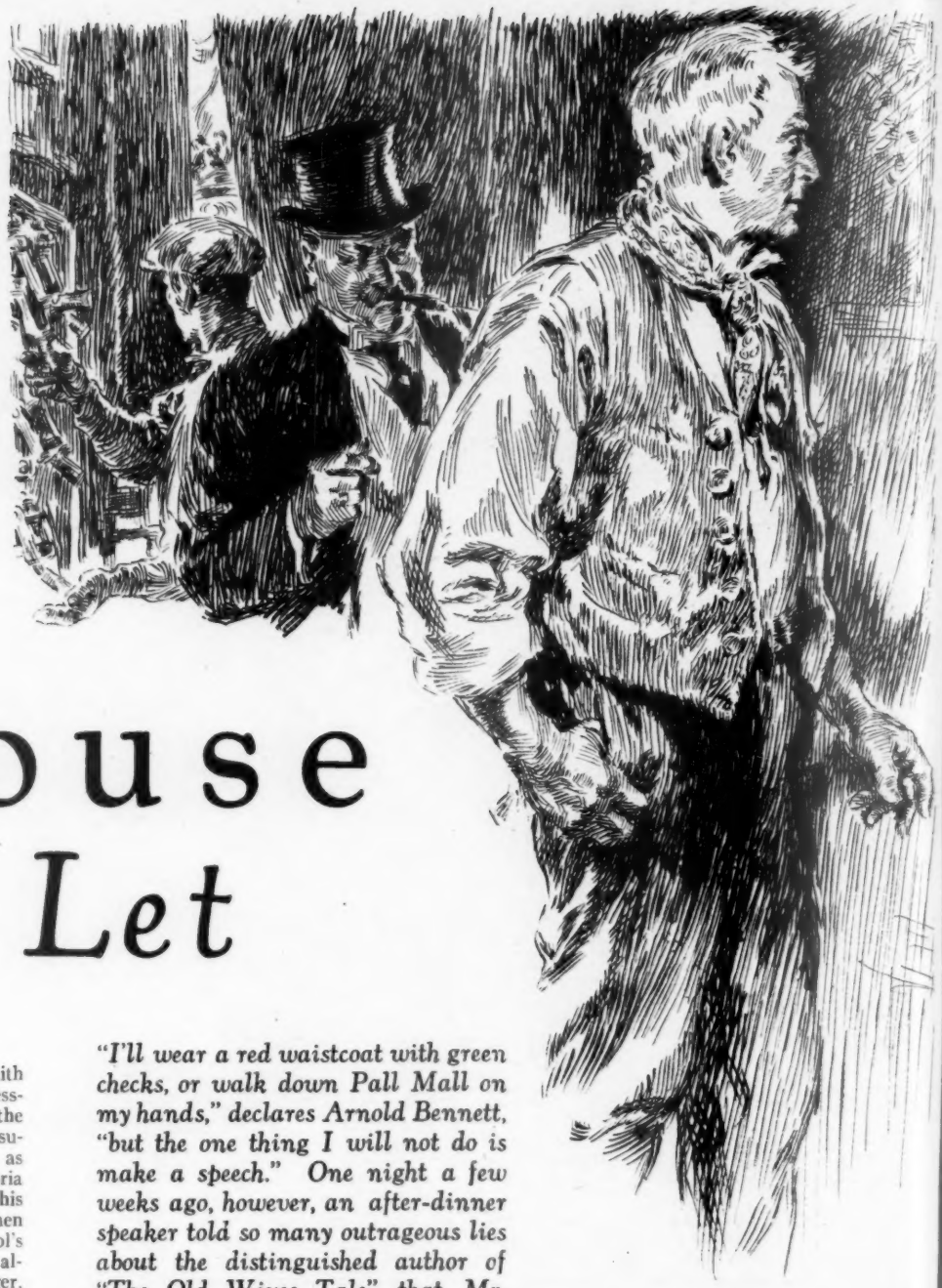
"I never had the opportunity. Rose Laflamme came to the shack and offered to tell all she knew about Laflamme's activities if I would take her that night to the railroad," Steele boldly answered, ignoring the inferences which might be drawn from the statement.

"And you refused, monsieur, to aid a beautiful woman in distress? Ah, that was not gallant." Although the smile was facetious, the eyes of Denise St. Onge were grave. Steele felt that he had been put on the defensive.

"I told her that we needed flour—would starve if we left that night. At that moment David knocked *(Continued on page 156)*

By

Arnold Bennett



House to Let

"I'll wear a red waistcoat with green checks, or walk down Pall Mall on my hands," declares Arnold Bennett, "but the one thing I will not do is make a speech." One night a few weeks ago, however, an after-dinner speaker told so many outrageous lies about the distinguished author of "The Old Wives Tale" that Mr. Bennett had to reply in self-defense. He didn't realize till next day that the ingenious toastmaster's libeling of him was a device to extract a speech.

WHEN the great Sol Smith came down from his dressing-room into the wings of the stage of the Victoria Empire (usually pronounced by its patrons as though it were written "Victoria Rempire"), Miss Nella Nora, his "lead," and the two young men who completed the cast of Sol's sketch "House to Let," were already waiting. The stage-manager, absorbed in the sole idea of flying time, was also waiting, with his eye on the clock. The orchestra was getting toward the end of the "selection" which divided the performance into halves. Sol's sketch always came next after the selection, because the selection gave the stage-hands fair opportunity to set the stage for the sketch; the Victoria Empire, though a large and prosperous music-hall, engaging some first-rate talent, did not possess one of those whirring revolving stages which permit a scene to be set at the back while another one is being used at the front.

Sol casually glanced at his wig in the long mirror hung for the use of artists by the side of the assistant stage-manager's little lair, and he happened to see, in addition to his wig, Miss Nella Nora making an impudent face at the nape of his neck, and then giving a pert smile to the two young men as if saying to them:

"Look what *I* think of the old codger!"

Now, to understand the full enormity of Nella's gesture, it is necessary to grasp the high importance of Sol Smith in the ranks of his profession. For fifteen years at least, Sol had toured the provinces as a music-hall comedian, had had a certain success, and had rarely been out of an engagement; but he had never reached the top-line of a bill. Then one night in an emergency he had been whisked off to the Alhambra from the Holloway Palace—which theater though only a few miles distant from the Alhambra, is morally as far away from it as Land's End; his appearance on the Alhambra's classic stage had been heralded by the words "Extra Act" in the illuminated number-frame; a quarter of an hour later, by exactly the same kind of performance as he had

Illustrated by Charles Sarka



"Getting your lines out of you is like drawing teeth out of a cow; that's what it's like!" said Sol, glaring at her.

been doing for over a decade in provincial towns, he had torrentially brought down the house, and was deranging the whole remainder of the program by his extra encores. On the following day the Stone Circuit had agreed to cancel his contract and give him a new and immensely superior contract; and in a fortnight he was a top-liner.

Such are the hazards of life. Sol Smith was surely a common-enough name; yet now it was differentiated from all the other million Smiths; and nobody asked "Who is Sol Smith?" because everybody knew. His name and no other name burned on the façade of the theater. When patrons bought seats, many of them would ask: "What time does Sol Smith come on?" Sol Smith filled the house; he did not fill merely the "second house" of a night; he filled the "first house," which began at six-fifteen. Even Sir Joshua, the managing director of the V. E. and of various other music-halls, treated Sol as an equal, and ordinary persons were proud to be seen in his society. Lastly, when his program number shone in the number-frame, it was always greeted with applause—the audience apparently not being able to wait for the sight of the actual man on the stage to express its gratification.

Considering that Nella Nora's salary was ten pounds a week, that Sol could have got fifty other girls to play her part at the same salary, that she was a mere chit without experience and without marked talent, that Sol had the right to sack her at any time on a fortnight's notice, and that in a word she was nobody at all — considering *these* matters, the enormity of her ribald gesture could not easily have been exaggerated. Sol Smith believed she fancied herself because she happened to be the granddaughter of the great Macdoodle, a super-star comedian of the music-halls in the 'eighties and 'nineties, long since retired but not wholly forgotten; and—he held the reason to be an inadequate one. . . . .

In the very famous sketch "House to Let," Sol Smith played the part of a caretaker. The scene was the reception-hall of a large tenantless house, with doors here and there all round, and a grand staircase leading to the upper floors. (The staircase of course curved away out of sight of the audience, and the persons who climbed it, when they also were out of sight of the audience, found themselves at the edge of nothing except a stepladder.) The plot of the sketch was concerned with a young house-agent's clerk and with a rich young couple on the eve of a clandestine marriage, who dallied with the idea of taking the house and who incidentally used the house as a place of meeting. There was also a telephone. Why the landlord should have been fool enough to keep a working telephone in an empty house was not explained; and anyhow, it was not a real telephone, but only a stage telephone, put there so that Sol could be side-splitting into it. Sol's telephonic conversations with the police, the fire-brigade, the house-agent's office and the doctor made a large part of the success of the piece.

Then there was the caretaker's maiden aunt, for whom he had a nephew's passion; a strange creature who did not appear at all, but from whom he received letters of advice and to whom he wrote letters describing the fearsome things that happened to him in the course of his calling as a caretaker.

And indeed, the things that did happen to him were of the most astonishing kind, and the deeds which he performed in order to cope with the dilemmas into which he fell were even more astonishing. He—that is, the caretaker—was a muddle-headed, untidy, dirty, rather besotted old man, very slow of speech, very slow on the uptake, very ready to accept tips—nay, bribes—and quite capable, for his own private purposes, of repelling all desirable prospective tenants. (Why, he argued with himself, should he help to let the house when the letting of it would deprive him of a job upon which he entirely depended for a livelihood?) On the other hand, he could be fatherly in an agreeable, benevolent way, and would continually offer sound worldly advice to all the young persons in the piece.

Further, although muddle-headed, he had moments of startling insight and rapidity of thought and action; in fact, in one of his moments of vision and decision, he succeeded in locking up the three other characters in three different rooms—a singular proceeding on the part of a humble, stupid caretaker! His snatches of letters to his well-loved unseen aunt, and the snatches of letters received from her, convulsed the audience from gallery down to orchestra. And his every remark was so contrived by the author, and so uttered by the strange, rich, juicy genius of Sol Smith, as to draw laughter and cataracts of laughter. If any of his lines failed to cause considerable amusement, those lines were cut and better lines substituted.

Thus, despite his wicked, unscrupulous, dishonest, idiotic disposition, the caretaker was as deeply adored by the audiences as the maiden aunt was deeply adored by the caretaker. And twice every night Sol Smith was called before the curtain again and again to bow to ovations which he had thoroughly deserved.

It should be mentioned that none of the other characters had lines to raise laughter. If in practice it was found that they had, the lines were cut and dull lines substituted, or the players were instructed to say them in a different and duller manner. And why not? The show was Sol Smith's show; Sol Smith had all the talent; and the audience came and paid to see Sol Smith—not a trio of mediocre nonentities. Sol would have preferred—and justifiably—to do a sketch in which figured one character only—himself; but such a sketch was not to be had. He was therefore bound to employ other artists: they were his necessary evil.

AS soon as he opened the front door of the empty house for Nella Nora, the great Sol Smith had perceived that she meant mischief. She followed him down the stage, but not far enough. "Come below me," he muttered to her in the midst of their first bit of dialogue. By which he meant: "Get nearer to the footlights than I am, and turn toward me."

The audience of the Victoria Empire heard not the muttered order; nor did they reck of the complicated technique which goes to the making of a star's success. It did not occur to them that the first rule in a music-hall star turn is that the star should always keep his expressive face in full view of his admirers; nor did they ask themselves how he could possibly accomplish this if he had to talk to a partner who kept *her* face in full view of his admirers. (Not *her* admirers—she had none!) In these painful circumstances the star is obliged either to talk at the audience, ignoring his partner, or to turn away from the audience so as to confront his partner. Nella Nora simply did not obey the muttered order. There she stuck, displaying her dark, chubby, pretty, simpering, extremely youthful features to the audience; and Sol Smith, being an artist, felt himself compelled to deprive the audience of his own features.

Sol was furious. But he dared not show his fury; he dared not even let his fury possess him, lest it might spoil his acting. He was helpless; he was at the mercy of the chit. He could do nothing whatever, short of walking right off the stage in dudgeon, or telling the assistant stage-manager to ring down the curtain. At rehearsals, and before and after shows, he was the boss and could enforce obedience; but with the curtain up, he was an actor with no more powers than the meanest of his troupe. Thus as the sketch proceeded, he had to continue being benevolent to the chit; he had to hide all his anguish.

However, when the telephone-bell rang, he fairly let himself loose on the instrument, with a movement and a tone which brought a roar of joy from the house, but no joy to his heart. The roar did not blind him to the fact that his performance was suffering. He thought that Nella Nora must have gone mad. Why else should she risk her livelihood by this inexcusable vagary?

Nella Nora next broke the second rule in a music-hall star turn. She was deliberately "slow on her cues," by which is meant that she deliberately delayed her replies to the caretaker's remarks, holding up the action of the piece and generally impairing effects. Her tendency had always been in this direction.

Sol Smith began to forget his own lines, and once the minx audibly prompted him!

He still controlled himself, for his own sake, but with a most exhausting nervous effort, and he felt like a camel who sees the last straw being brought along. But at the end of the short scene, as he locked her in the little room on the right, he locked her in savagely, and in addition gave her *sotto voce*, with masterly brevity, a goodish piece of his mind. The mischief was that she had actually won applause on her exit: which was an outrage upon professional etiquette. She had not been engaged to win applause; she had been engaged to help the star to win applause.

THE next scene, with the two young men, went better for Sol Smith. The two young men at any rate would never dare to play tricks on him; they probably had young wives to support, or candy and flowers to pay for; also they had sense, and a sense of decency too. The surcease was short. On her second entrance Nella Nora made clear her intention to break the third rule in a music-hall star turn. She simply would not stand stock still and utterly expressionless while Sol Smith talked. Obviously every underling who attempts to act while the star talks, distracts the attention of the audience from the star. Nella Nora improvised "business" of her own during Sol's wonderful back-chat,—or perhaps she did not improvise it; perhaps she had carefully thought it all out beforehand! She actually got laughs; the audience actually laughed at her when it ought to have been laughing at Sol Smith! Sol swallowed the medicine as best he could, and he swallowed it nobly, because he was a man of vast experience; but if somebody had shouted "Fire!" and so brought the safety-curtain down, and the show to an end, he would have been rather pleased; and it is doubtful whether he would have been very annoyed to see Nella Nora a bit singed by the flames.

Well, he would dismiss her this very night. He would give her a fortnight's salary on the spot and send her packing. . . . . No, he could not quite do that, because he had no other pretty young woman trained and rehearsed to take her place.

Why was she trying to ruin him and to ruin herself? What was her grievance against him? He admitted that he had been rather severe with her on the previous night, had employed in his observations to her a vocabulary perhaps too free and varied. But if chits were to begin to resent plain speaking and expressive English from stars of the largest magnitude, there was an end to discipline on the music-hall stage—indeed, there was an end to the country, and to the world itself!

When the curtain fell, Sol fancied that the applause was less voluminous and frenetic than usual; but quite possibly the diminution existed only in Sol's deranged fancy. His worst trial came then; for it was etiquette that he should hand his leading lady before the curtain. A desolating ordeal! Involuntarily he crushed her frail little hand in his, crushed it with ferocity. She did not blanch nor flinch. She just smiled and bowed—to the audience and to him, with an amazing impish sweetness.

"Now!" he said to himself, rolling up the shirt-sleeves of his soul for a fighting display, as he followed her off the stage amid the hands who were "striking the set" and amid the acrobats who were waiting in the wings for their turn.

"Not very good tonight, Mr. Smith," said the assistant stage-manager to him.

"What the Hades do you mean?" Sol demanded ferociously.

"Thirty-one minutes," said the assistant stage-manager, who judged every turn by its length.

The official allotted time for "House to Let" was twenty-nine minutes. Two minutes lost, and the assistant stage-manager knew well that he would never get them back!

"Here, you! Miss Springfield!" said Sol Smith. (Springfield was Nella Nora's name in the archives of the Registrar of Births.) She turned and faced him, still smiling, but rubbing her crushed hand.

"Getting your lines out of you is like drawing teeth out of a cow; that's what it's like!" said Sol, glaring at her. "And I told you the same last night."

"Yes, you did," answered Nella, with an astounding pertness. "And if you tell it to me again tomorrow night, I'm finished with



The caretaker, having snatched the watch, uttered these memorable words: "One more thing, mister: you've insulted my granddaughter."

you, Mr. Smith, *and* at once, and so I don't mind telling you."

She ran away, and he could say no more.

She had finished with *him*. *She* was threatening to get rid of *him*. Ah! She had youth, her prettiness, her charm; and she was trading on them! That was it! Sol Smith was very unhappy, chiefly because he did not know what to do. Fortunately, the acrobats were Italian and did not understand English. . . . .

About a week after the events above described, Sol Smith stood one afternoon in fashionable Lowndes Street, staring at a large house which bore a sign to the effect that it was to let, and in Sol Smith's pocket was an order to view the house, which had five floors and was very fine to the sight. Also in Sol's pocket was a new contract with Sir Joshua for four years at the rate of four hundred pounds a week—instead of three hundred and fifty.

Sol's income was still rising, and of course his prestige was rising too. He was rich, and he was steadily getting richer. His wife, a stout lady of bourgeois tastes, had had the idea of moving from Clapham to the West End; the idea pleased Sol. He had looked about, and the particulars of the house in Lowndes Street had taken his fancy. Nay, more, they had intoxicated him—so much so that he had more than once mentioned the enterprise, and at least once shown the particulars of the house, to admiring acquaintances and fellow-performers within the Victoria Empire and elsewhere; and on the previous evening he had told Sir Joshua himself, and one of the young men in his sketch, that the following afternoon was to be consecrated to an inspection of the property, which was variously set forth in the particulars as a "noble mansion," a "town house" and "a gentleman's residence."

And now at last, having crossed the street, he was on the threshold. Being an artist by temperament, his imagination moved very quickly and grandiosely, and already the house was his, and a powerful and luxurious motorcar stood throbbing at the curb and he was coming down the front steps with his dresser behind him, and a respectful chauffeur holding open the door of the car, and a few watchers saying to themselves: "Here's the great Sol Smith going out to do his night's work." The front steps were of marble, broad and massive. He looked up and saw floor lifting above floor into the skies. He contrasted this magnificent abode with his mother's grubby little house in Slip Street, Salford, where he was born; and, justifiably proud, he decided that the world was good and life worth living, and that virtue and industry and genius were much less than their own reward.

Withal he felt a little nervous, for he knew that a viscount lived next door. He thought it was queer that he, the great Sol Smith, the idol of populations, should feel nervous, but feel nervous he did.

Then he perceived, on a card hung crookedly in the dirty but immense dining-room window, the words "Caretaker Within." He smiled, with pleasant anticipation. He had been interpreting the rôle of a caretaker of a large house for many months; but he had never to his knowledge actually *(Continued on page 122)*

Dixie

Illustrated by Dudley Gloyne Summers



She turned on Dexter. "Pick up that money, suh — pick it up, I tell you!"

By *Gerald Beaumont*

The reader can generally count on four fine things in a Gerald Beaumont story—a laugh, a tear, a thrill and a bit of idealism. His "fan mail" comes from every State in the Union, England, South Africa and Australia. Among the letters which he cherishes most are those written him from behind prison bars by men who count the days until the next Red Book comes out with its new Beaumont story.

JUDGE JEFFREY ROBERTS of Robertsville, Kentucky, was once compelled to decide a case out of court that involved the two conflicting loves of his life, and the circumstances were these:

First, you must understand that the Judge had been a home-town institution for thirty years, and was generally regarded as the squarest man on the bench, and the biggest liar off it, in the history of Kentucky. His passion was blood-lines, human and equine, and this all-absorbing interest manifested itself in two ways: he was always trying to establish a cousinly relationship with those to whom he was introduced, and he had beggared himself in a vain effort to win the Eclipse Stakes with a colt from the Maria West family.

A picturesque figure on the bench, he acquitted himself with even more distinction in the lobby of the Robertsville Hotel, where he was always to be found outside of court hours, serving as a self-constituted reception-committee for all strangers. The Judge's method was to inspect the hotel register, and then to introduce himself to the latest arrival with a formula that varied only in the use of the name.

"I beg yo' pa'don, suh, but have I the hono' of addressing the Hen'y Jones whose mother was a Lee of Louisville, daughter of Hen'y Clay Lee, whose mate'nal aunt was a fou'th cousin of the speaker? . . . . No? Well, it's my loss, suh!"

Never yet had the Judge found anyone who fitted his formula, but the habit was now fixed, and it served at least one sociable purpose. Most men invited the Judge to accompany them to the hotel bar, so that they could apologize in a suitable way for not being his cousin.

"Ve'y good idea, suh!" he acquiesced, and for as long afterward as anyone would listen to him, he described the wonders of his Willowbrook Farm, with its broad lawns, twelve fountains, magnificent stables and long line of winning sires. It was always a matter of mortification to him that at this precise moment the main mansion and guest-cottages were being remodeled, precluding the possibility of his entertaining anyone in a befitting manner. "Some othe' time, suh," he apologized, "I should be most happy!"

The Judge had played this rôle day after day for so many years that he no longer realized he was acting. Strangers were always much impressed until they were disillusioned at the proper time by the bartender, who was a product of Brooklyn.

"Him? Why, that old bird established the national debt. He'd put a second mortgage on a flowerpot. Don't pay no attention to the Judge. He's what they call a 'Kentucky blow-out'—too much air in a bum tire."

Nevertheless, to every man, no matter who or what he is, there are given certain compensating dreams which linger like perfumed incense on the inner altar of his happiness. Willowbrook Farm, which a half-century before had been the pride of Kentucky, now consisted of a neglected scrubby mansion, a few ramshackle barns and a ravine that traversed scrubby pasture-land. The only

servants that remained were those who were too lazy to move away. Nevertheless, Judge Roberts viewed his home with serene pride, for it held at least one fair Kentucky jewel, his motherless daughter "Mittie Sue," slim and brown-eyed, who lived for her father alone.

Mittie was a Cinderella if there ever was one—condemned to poverty and deprivations all her life, the sacrificial slave to her father's weakness. It was she who performed household miracles at Willowbrook, who stood as the buffer between her father and his creditors, who listened to his vainglorious boastings and smiled sadly at his empty promises. With nothing more valuable to her name than a calico dress, she had seen her father bartering their patrimony for horseflesh on which he lavished further funds. But there was never a thought of rebellion in her mind. Judge Roberts' legal training always enabled him to present the matter in a way that silenced her arguments. He defended himself skillfully.

"Come now, my dear," he was accustomed to conclude, "kiss your father and let him tell you just what is involved by crossing the Maria West lines with the fourteenth family of influential sires. You see, Mittie Sue, it's like this—"

The girl could never resist his pleading arms, nor the blandishments by which he sought to cover up his own failures. In his tender moments, and they were many, the Judge sought to atone for the fact that all his life he had been following the phantom of another dream. As a matter of fact, the Judge had gone so far along the trail of the thoroughbred, that to abandon his pursuit now was to acknowledge the futility of his years of effort. Only by producing the wonderful colt of his dreams could he ever vindicate his judgment and fulfill his long-deferred duty to his daughter. . . . .

Spring blew its early breath on Kentucky, ushering in a magic morning at Willowbrook Farm. The brood mare Southern Melody, heavy with foal, stood at the open half-door of her stall, flexing dainty ears toward "Pockets" Jackson, who was mixing a bucket of warm feed. The youngster was very small and very black, and he got his name from the extraordinary number of pockets with which his tattered clothes were ornamented. His voice rose lustily:

Bullfrog, Bullfrog, listen to ma tune:
Ol' bay mare goin' have her colt soon.
Goin' be a winner—
Goin' lead the way—
Nigga kid ride him—Eclipse Day!

"Mawnin', Marse Judge!"

Judge Roberts, tall and angular, attired in his shiny suit of black broadcloth, returned the little negro's greeting with a nod, and then stretched forth a caressing hand to the mare from whom he hoped would come the answer to a horseman's prayer.

None but the true breeder can appreciate the sacred thrill, the divine joy that is the reward of those who have given the world its greatest example of eugenics. Human beings mate without regard to blood-lines, but the man who creates new thoroughbred life demands unblemished ancestry that has stood the test of the centuries. From the fittest and the fleetest of the kings and queens of the turf, the breeder selects new progeny, compounding courage, endurance, speed, ambition and all the precious qualities developed by selected generations. Then some day, if his judgment be right and no untoward accident has interfered, he stands by a white-washed rail, glasses leveled at the far turn. Ah, matchless indeed is the thrill when he beholds his colors flash into the lead, borne on to victory by the life that he has called from out the shadowy past and the ancient, sunburned sands of Arabia!

Of all these things, Judge Roberts was conscious as he stroked the satin neck of



The Judge reeled forward to throw his arms about his sweetheart's neck. "Dixie, my dea'!" he sobbed. "Is it really you?"

Southern Melody, a royal cripple for whom he had given half his farm. Now the mare was in foal to Marse Dick, the great stallion owned by Colonel Collender, and she was so close to her time that she rested her heavy head on Judge Roberts' shoulder and pleaded dumbly for him not to leave her.

"Now, now, my dear!" he comforted. "Don't upset the dignity of the Cou't." He turned to Pockets. "Take her out in the sunshine, but mind you bring her in early. Those look powe'fully like rain-clouds."

"Yassuh, Marse Judge. You reckon she's gwine have colt or filly?"

"Colt, of cou'se! You don't suppose a filly could win the Eclipse, do you?"

"Nawsuh—leastwise, it aint neva' been done."

But Dixie turned out to be a little filly just the same, and it was born that very day under circumstances that more than ever endeared it to the owner of Willowbrook.

All the Judge's help had sneaked off to a cockfight promoted by Turkey Jones. In their absence, Southern Melody felt the call of motherhood, broke the frayed rope and wandered off to a patch of scrub oak on the hill. The spring storm broke with sudden fury, and it was almost dark before the frightened Pockets Jackson located the mare, trotting back and forth along the edge of a ravine as though seeking a way to descend.

"Ol' fool mare!" panted the little negro. "If Judge find this out, he give me life sentence. Quit backin' up, an' come 'long home."

By use of a nose twitch he compelled her to accompany him. He had just locked her safely in her stall, when Judge Roberts returned from town.

"Colt here yet?" inquired the Judge.

"Nawsuh, nothin' heah 'cept rain."

Alas for the ignorance of a stableboy! A tiny thoroughbred, only a few hours old, was at that moment struggling feebly to climb out of the gully into which it had slipped. But a fallen tree and a boulder held it in a trap where rising water lapped at baby flanks. Near by, a half-starved mountain "cat," attracted by the feeble efforts of the victim, watched with ever-increasing interest.

Mother love was all that prevented a tragedy, for Southern Melody raised such a disturbance in her stall that Judge Roberts rose from his dinner-table to investigate. He was too good a horseman not to know what had happened. Every vestige of color fled from his face.

"She's foaled!" he gasped.

Two minutes later the mare had been turned loose to make her way through the storm. Behind her followed Judge Roberts calling down the vengeance of heaven upon the frightened farmhands who hurried at his side. "I'll fry yo' black ca'casses in oil! I'll make hog-food o' eve'y nigga on my estate! I'll—"

"Yassuh," they told him. "Us is runnin' right now."

Quick as they were to take up the trail, maternal courage had won half the battle when they reached the scene. The bobbing light of lanterns revealed the picture. Southern Melody's hoofs had crushed the skull of the feline enemy, and the mare was striving with her teeth to free her imprisoned foal. Judge Roberts gathered the tiny creature in his arms. Pockets led the now complacent mare; and they returned to the shelter of the Willowbrook barn. Mittie Sue came out to greet them. Darky hands flocked around for a closer inspection of the new arrival.

"Why, it's a filly!" protested Pockets. "Ah loses me a dolla' bet. Boy hawss aint nuthin' but a gal! Cain't win no Eclipse wif' a filly!"

Judge Roberts looked up, and there was a strange light in his eyes.

"You black igno'amus—nothing is impossible for a foal by Marse Dick out o' Southern Melody. A filly is just what I desi'ed, a natu'al handicap of sex which will make the supe'io'ity of her blood-lines all the mo' manifest! Mittie Sue, my dea', behold the culminating product o' the Maria West lines, the first o' her sex who will lead home her field in the Eclipse Stakes!"

There was something convincingly prophetic in Judge Roberts' voice and manner. Mittie Sue dropped to her knees and fondled the baby thoroughbred. "Dixie," she whispered, "is it true? Are you going to make us all happy some day? Why, look, Daddy, she's nodding her head!"

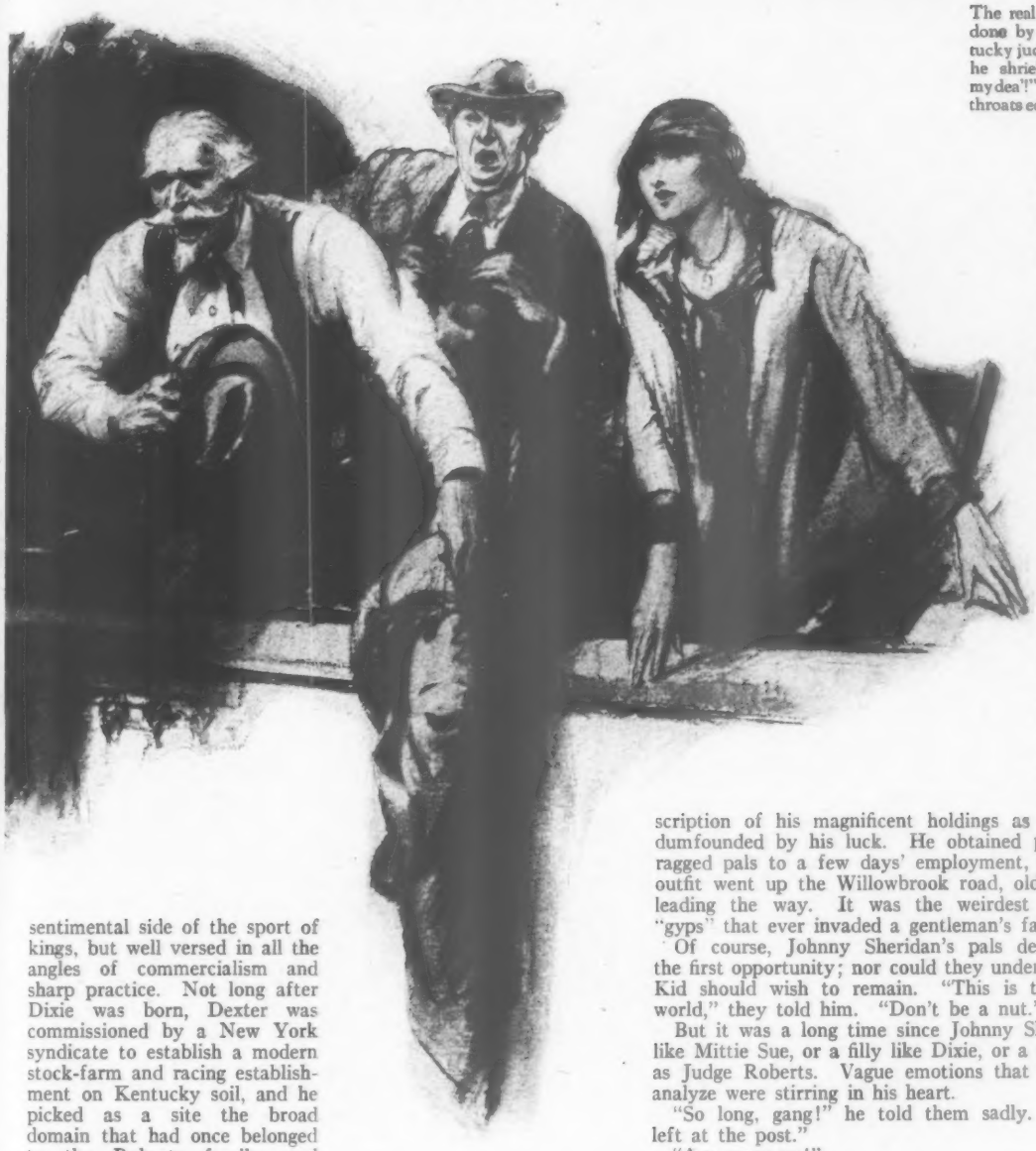
"Got water in her ears," said the Judge. "Come now, Mittie, wa'm blankets—take them off my bed—and fetch some hot milk in a nu'sing bottle. Eve'body get powe'ful busy."



Mittie could not induce the Judge to leave the stall wherein mare and foal were made as comfortable as possible. Along toward morning, the Judge fell asleep, nursing bottle in hand; whereupon Dixie managed to make better arrangements with her mother.

Thereafter, both in and out of court, Judge Roberts could think of nothing but the soft-eyed, velvet-limbed daughter of Southern Melody. He buttonholed everyone, even the creditors whom he had been stalling off for twenty years with his bland assurance. "The matter will be taken ca'e of at the propah time, suh!" They were afraid to harass him too much for fear that he would adjudge them in contempt of court.

But for every delightful old gentleman of Judge Roberts' type, there is always some one who seems put on earth for no other purpose than to take all the joy out of life. Such a man was Brant Dexter, a horseman of a far different school, blind to the



The real rooting was done by an old Kentucky judge. "Dixie!" he shrieked. "Dixie, my dea!" A thousand throats echoed the cry.

sentimental side of the sport of kings, but well versed in all the angles of commercialism and sharp practice. Not long after Dixie was born, Dexter was commissioned by a New York syndicate to establish a modern stock-farm and racing establishment on Kentucky soil, and he picked as a site the broad domain that had once belonged to the Roberts family, and which the old Judge had so confidently assured his daughter he would buy back "at the propah time."

It was a bitter blow to his pride to see Roberts' sacred soil desecrated by Northerners, to behold his privacy invaded by those who were able to translate into action his own futile dreams. No longer could he hope to conceal from his daughter the difference between vainglorious boasting and practical accomplishment. But the habit was very strong upon him, and repeatedly he assured the troubled Mittie Sue:

"I am in touch with distinguished financiers, my dea'. We shall fo'm a co'po'ation and make Willowbrook the supe'io' o' any damn No'the'n plant in the country."

But of course this was idle talk. All the old Judge ever did was to employ Johnny Sheridan, the "Dancing Kid," under circumstances that require special mention. Johnny was twenty-two, gray-eyed, and equipped by nature with nimble feet and a strong sense of humor. He and a number of race-track hustlers en route from New Orleans were disgorged from an express-car at Robertsville, and their subsequent efforts to obtain food and entertainment at the expense of the community led to their being hailed before Judge Roberts.

The Dancing Kid, acting as spokesman for the party, would undoubtedly have received the limit for his impudence, had not his keen eyes identified the portrait of a horse that adorned the courtroom wall. Young Sheridan's cynical expression vanished, replaced by a look of profound admiration. He addressed the court:

"Aint that Kentucky Kate, Your Honor? I helped saddle her the day she beat St. Ivan a head on the post. Hurt her ankle fifty yards out and finished on three legs. I'll say she was the queen of the earth!"

"Young man," said Judge Roberts, "I had the hono' of owning that ho'se. Case is dismissed! Cou't's adjou'ned! Come into my chambers, suh. I shall offe' you the sup'eme oppo'tunity of a lifetime!"

That was how Judge Roberts got his new track superintendent and general manager. The Dancing Kid accepted the Judge's description of his magnificent holdings as gospel truth, and was dumfounded by his luck. He obtained permission to stake his ragged pals to a few days' employment, and at dusk the whole outfit went up the Willowbrook road, old Judge Roberts' buggy leading the way. It was the weirdest collection of paddock "gyps" that ever invaded a gentleman's fair estate.

Of course, Johnny Sheridan's pals deserted their "jobs" at the first opportunity; nor could they understand why the Dancing Kid should wish to remain. "This is the joke layout of the world," they told him. "Don't be a nut."

But it was a long time since Johnny Sheridan had seen a girl like Mittie Sue, or a filly like Dixie, or a character as fascinating as Judge Roberts. Vague emotions that he did not attempt to analyze were stirring in his heart.

"So long, gang!" he told them sadly. "Here's where I get left at the post."

"Aw, come on!"

"No can do! Got to run my vast estate with its hundred niggers and forty-four fountains. Contempt of court if I beat it now." He grinned broadly. "Hit 'em hard, boys, and if old fat Heine is still leadin' the band at Jefferson, ask him to play 'My Old Kentucky Home' once for me."

He escorted them down the winding lane, where they took leave, firmly believing he was crazy. They marched off, singing, "My Old Kentucky Home, Good Night!"—only they put an unpleasant emphasis on the last two words.

The lazy days stretched into weeks, and the weeks into months. Summer passed and came again. The Mira Monte Stock-farm became a marvelous reality, a practical, well-equipped estate with a splendid track, modern stables, and a large corps of experienced employees. Dexter knew his business. His expenditures at Robertsville had made him a power in that community. He was not popular, but he did not want to be. Cash spoke, nay more—*it commanded!*

Meanwhile, Willowbrook, seedier than ever, had witnessed the unfolding of two romances, one represented by an old man's adoration for a filly that seemed to care for nothing but his caresses, the other a mere dream of youth, beautiful as a painted bubble, and just as likely to vanish into emptiness. Dixie had taken kindly to her training, and was now approaching the time when she must complete her education on a race-track itself.

Small wonder that Judge Roberts lavished upon this soft-eyed creature of his dreams all the affection of which an old Ken-

tuckian is capable. No music in all the world could equal the shrill welcoming neigh that greeted him each evening as he strolled down to Dixie's stall with his customary tribute of sugar, an apple or some bit of sweets.

He had a little trick of holding up before the filly's eyes a jockey's silk jacket, the Roberts colors, and talking to her in tense, vibrating tones, under which Dixie's delicate ears quivered, her eyes grew fervent, her nostrils dilated, and her exquisitely molded frame began to tremble with excitement.

"Imagination!" explained the old Judge to his superintendent. "She sees he'self facing the webbing. Look at her, suh, and behold what breeding can do. There, there, sweethea't!" He quieted her with a long, firm stroke of his wrinkled hand. He used to talk to her for an hour at a time, confessing things he would never have admitted to anyone else. This, of course, was when they were alone.

"Dixie," he would say, "you know, I'm not quite so impo'tant o' wealthy as some people believe. Come powe'fully nea' to bein' a lyin' ol' fool. Aint got a penny, Dixie—an' I neve' did have much. Reckon that su'p'ises you? *It don't?* Knew it all along, eh? And you love the old Judge despite eve'ything, eh? Well, by gad, that shows the supe'io'ity of equine intelligence!"

Dixie vastly preferred to be an old man's darling rather than a young man's slave. Judge Roberts only petted her, never once administered a scolding, no matter what mischief she got into. On the other hand the Dancing Kid, who was well versed in the practical end of the game, believed in discipline and hard work. Dixie had as much temperament as a prima donna. She liked the Kid, but she wanted to have her own way about everything, and many the tough battle that was staged between the filly and the young track superintendent.

The Dancing Kid had stayed on at Willowbrook. He told himself that it was because of his interest in Dixie and Judge Roberts. But that was not the real reason that held him from the race-track atmosphere that was like the breath of life to him. Mittie Sue knew what it was, and it presented a problem over which her heart and reason clashed.

It was not unnatural that a young race-track gypsy should fall in love with a sweet, unspoiled Kentucky girl like Mittie Sue, nor that she should feel herself drawn to this whimsical, carefree youth who fitted into the family life as intimately as though he were her brother. There were times when the spell of old Kentucky was reflected in lazy sunshine trickling through a lover's lane of stately trees, or moonlight nights, with Turkey Jones and Snowball strumming old songs on broken banjos. It seemed then to Mittie Sue that nothing else mattered, so long as Johnny Sheridan was at her side, wistfully eager to win a forgiving smile. But there were other moments when she saw the truth more clearly, and all her intelligence rebelled against a continuation of the life she had always led. This boy, quaint, witty, lovable as he was, had the same weaknesses as her father. She loved him, yes; but always when it seemed that he might measure up to her expectation, he spoiled the illusion by his irresponsible love of the ridiculous. He had signs all over the place: *"Employees' Entrance, North Gate," "Site of Proposed Grandstand," "Superintendent's Office," "Interviews by Appointment Only," "No Trucks Allowed on this Boulevard."*

His answer to every problem was much like that of her father: "Don't worry; there's a good time coming. Dixie will win us a million dollars."

But the girl had been fed on just such empty promises all her life, and she was fast approaching the limit of her endurance.

DOWN from New York came the Peter H. Bosworths, owners of Mira Monte, to inspect the string of equine juveniles that Dexter had gathered for their approval. Bosworth, a mining man whom sudden wealth had not spoiled, encountered Judge Roberts at the hotel bar, and took a fancy to the picturesque Kentuckian. He listened with interest to the Judge's glowing description of Dixie.

"Bring her over to my place," he invited. "We're going to have some try-outs this afternoon. I'd like to see Dixie in action."

"A gentlemanly contest, suh," accepted the Judge, "would be a pleasure indeed."

Johnny Sheridan would never have consented to such a test had he known of it, but he was absent in Lexington that day, and when he returned at nightfall, the damage had been done. Dixie, ridden by Pockets Jackson, had defeated by ten lengths the pick of the Mira Monte barns, and it was purely a question now of what method Brant Dexter would employ to gain possession of the fastest "trick" in Kentucky.

Unwittingly, Mrs. Bosworth set the stage on which Judge Roberts' altar of sacrifice was subsequently erected. Just as her husband had been attracted to the quaint old jurist, so Mrs. Bosworth was captivated by the shy-eyed, unspoiled Mittie Sue. Like many another wealthy woman, it flattered her vanity sometimes to play the Lady Bountiful to pretty Cinderellas. She had a passion for romantic matches, and it occurred to her that it would be rather amusing to try her skill in behalf of this rural rose. "My dear," she told the girl, "I want you to return with me to New York. Now, don't bother about anything—just run and ask your father."

The girl was lifted to the seventh heaven of anticipation—only to be plunged into the depths of disappointment and helplessness, for Judge Roberts temporized in this as in all else. "Some othe' time, my dea'. Mrs. Boswo'th is ve'y cha'ming, but I think we had bette' await some othe' occasion. You see, Mittie, there will be ce'tain expenses in connection with Dixie—"

THE girl turned aside quickly to hide the tears of mortification. It had always been thus—deprived of everything for which she had ever wished by her father's blind selfishness. Yet he was all she had, and in other things he was tenderness personified. Mittie Sue never argued such matters, for her father could always justify himself with such apparent logic that the girl was helpless. She did not know at the time that before Peter Bosworth returned to New York, he had asked her father to name his own price for Dixie, and that the answer had been: "Might as well ask me to sell my daughter, suh!" It would not have made much difference if she had known it. Mittie Sue had no conception of the value of Dixie as measured in dollars and cents. She was to learn the truth from Brant Dexter, and to learn it in such a way as to bring about Judge Roberts' undoing.

Dexter had said to his employer just before the latter left: "I'll have Dixie in a Mira Monte stall in ten days. Leave everything to me. I know how to handle the Judge."

Johnny Sheridan was not surprised when Dexter appeared at Willowbrook two evenings later, and bluntly announced that he had come to buy Dixie. The Dancing Kid was lolling in a hammock on the porch, and he heard the conversation between the two men as it drifted through the open window of the living-room. Mittie Sue was in the kitchen.

It was a cruel method that Dexter chose, but he was a cruel man. He counted out on the table ten thousand dollars in currency, and having done that, he proceeded to strip Judge Roberts of all the absurd pretenses the latter had cultivated so persistently all his life. In vain the old Kentuckian sought to employ such phrases as "the honor of a gentleman." He was dealing now with a man who knew him for what he was. Dexter cut him short.

"Don't talk to me about honor, you lying old fool. You've been cheating that girl of yours for twenty years, and the whole town knows it. Why don't you let her visit Mrs. Bosworth? If you love the kid, why don't you give her a chance? She never seen a show in her life—she aint got a dress to her name. Why, a lousy race-track gyp wouldn't hold out on his daughter. You aint even doin' right by the horse. If you think more of Dixie than you do of your daughter, why don't you turn the filly over to somebody that can afford to give her the proper kind of handling?"

Judge Roberts swayed. "My daughter, suh," he stammered, "is happy with her father. You have no right to presume."

"Oh, hell!" said Dexter. "I dare you to call that girl in here and let her see what ten thousand dollars looks like. Call yourself a judge, don't you. Well, decide between your daughter and your horse, and let her see with her own eyes what kind of a man they put on the Kentucky bench."

Judge Roberts' face went sheet white. "Suh!" he pleaded, and turned to behold Mittie Sue standing in the doorway. Behind her in the hall, the Dancing Kid paused in the shadows to observe the scene.

"My dea'," said the old Kentuckian, "this man says—this man offers—" He indicated the wealth that blanketed the table. "Mittie Sue, that money will be ours if I sell Dixie. You can have that which I have long denied you. It is fo' you to decide, my dea'."

The girl was a little thoroughbred. She had caught only a fragment of the debate, but she seemed to divine much that had passed between the two men, and to comprehend that her father had been deeply wounded. She turned on Dexter.

"Pick up that money, suh—pick it up, I tell you!" And then for the first time she seemed to become *(Continued on page 151)*



ONE DAY Nina Putnam was sitting on the sun-porch of an immense Atlantic City hotel watching the bathing-girl parade winding its way up the Boardwalk toward the Inlet. The girls were all lovely and most of them were shivering, for the air was cold. They gave the effect of being scared to death. The thought that they might be became the germ of the present story, which you're going to say is one of the best Nina Putnam pieces you have ever read — and no other American writer is more widely read and chuckled over than she is.

By

Nina Wilcox Putnam

The Beauty Prize

Illustrated by Gustavus C. Widney

THAT old champion gunman Atlas, the boy who they say held up the world, hadn't no more determination then the average pretty girl has, nowadays, when she makes a break from the old home town and hits out for New York City. Generally she's got the idea of having the place at her feet. But as a usual thing, the only time she has it there is when she goes up the Woolworth Building to get a slant at the view.

When I first come down from Stonybrook, Connecticut, and went to work at Madame Estelle's beauty-parlor, upstairs on West Forty-second, that was about the way with me. But New York stood the shock of my arrival remarkable well and didn't appear to think I could teach it a great deal, commencing in Madame's place, where as a starter I found out the correspondence course I had took in manicuring was not what Madame liked.

"Go on, Connie, cut all the cuticle off, if she tells you!" says Katie Gorman, the other manicure, to me, after Madame had give me the bawling-out, and I was feeling pretty low. "These dolls that blow in here for a cheap shine don't care nothing about a scientific job. All they want is a pair of pink-tipped mitts that glitter. That kind spoils quicker than your water-and-soap stuff, and they gotter come back sooner, for a new one."

"Can you imagine!" I says, indignant. "Why, it aint honest!"

"It may not be up your way," says Katie, tossing her neat dark shingle-bob at me with a wise twist, "but why worry, if it gets you by in the real town? Bluff it out, dearie, and shut up!"

Well, of course I seen her point, and Madame's, especially as my job depended on it. Living aint so low in the big city, and here I was obliged to send home a stack of paper cakes every week to help out, ever since Pa got that stroke. So I done it Madame's way. After all, I didn't want to get the few people I knew, off of me. Because New York, when you are not acquainted there, aint exactly clubby. And for the first few months I was glad to speak to these friends, even when I didn't like 'em! In other words I belonged, but nobody knew it.

Then one day everything was changed. I got acquainted with Eddie Schwartz.

It was the noon hour, and I had put in a part of it writing

my weekly letter to my boy-friend that I used to go out with back home—George Brady, that lived next door to us but was now a radio-salesman, doing pretty good on the road. Well, I had written this letter, see, and went out to mail it, and at the same time to tuck away a heavy noon meal of chocolate ice-cream soda. But when I hit the street, there was something going on stopped me right where I was.

The store under Madame's white dimity joint was a music store—one of Looley Brothers' chain. It had enormous big windows crammed with every musical thing a person could imagine, and the door of it was generally open in any weather, so's the phonograph could blare good and plenty, and at night it done the same by electricity through a horn.

This noon the piece they had going was "My Sweetheart is Mother," and I was standing listening with a bubble in my throat when pretty soon I commenced to notice that one of the fellers who worked there was giving me the come-and-get-it. He was a awful snappy-looking boy with varnished hair and a new blue suit that set on him like butter on hot cakes, and his thin dark face had that white, wise look that gives a person a thrill and scare all at the same time. Girls generally fall for it.

"Looking for something?" he says.

"Was you speaking to me?" I says.

"Don't you know me?" he says.

"Well, your manner is awful familiar, but I can't seem to place your face," I come back. "I was thinking of buying that record."

"Come in!" he says, detaching himself from the door. "Glad to play it for you. As to placing my face—well, you might decide about that when you know me better!"

I hesitated a minute, and then decided I'd sooner have the record than eat lunch. He led me through the jazz-garage, into a glass room which pretty near shut off the various tunes that was going on around it.

"Sit down," says he, "and let me play you some of the other newest numbers."

"Oh, I aint got the price of more than the one," I says, "but I'm simply crazy over music!"

"That's me!" he says, enthusiastic. "I play a little, myself."

"You don't say! Who told you so?"

"Sure I can!" says he. "I play the laughing trombone. Matter of fact, I'm pretty good, but my enemies keep me out of where I belong."

"How's that?" I says.

"Why, if I had my rights," he says, "I'd be in one of the big jazz orchestras like Phil Wrightman's, or Ed Louis', getting fifteen hundred a week. But do I get in? Not a chance!"

"Why not, if you're so good?" I says.

"Well, it aint generally known, but I believe you got to buy your way into them big orchestras; that's why," he says. "If I had a coupla grand, I'd slip it to the leader, see? But where is a boy like me going to raise it, when he's got nothing but talent?"

"That ought to be enough," I claimed. "If a person is actually good in their line, why, they can bet it wont be overlooked."

"Blah!" says Eddie. "Maybe you think I aint good, huh? Wait, and I'll show you!"

With that he give a dash for the door, and come back in a minute with a trombone under his wing. Then he shut the door and put the brass to his mouth.

Well, he could laugh it, all right! He made it chuckle and sob, and laugh way down deep, and whoop like a Southern coon. He broke it, oncet or twice, but as he explained, that really didn't hurt any.

"Pretty near anyone is liable to," he says, "but it gets by in the general noise. A person has to get along on bluff a good deal in any line. Say, Miss—"

"Du Bois."

"Say, Miss Du Bois," he says, "how about a little dinner tonight, and a dance or two, up to Roseland?"

"Well," I says, all kind of fluttery inside, on account this was the first time any gentleman that looked the part had asked me out since I come to town,"—well, I guess it could be done!"

"All right; fine!" says he. "Say, excuse me mentioning it, but you certainly are a type any man will do himself credit appearing along Broadway with. What time will I call?"

"Oh," I says, "I'd sooner you didn't call for me, please. It's kind of—well, inconvenient. Suppose I meet you on the corner about seven?"

"You're on!" he says. And then I had to beat it back upstairs, five minutes late for my two o'clock customer, my letter to George, which I had forgot to mail, still in my hand.

Well, the reason why I didn't want Eddie to call for me, was I didn't like to have him see where I lived. The house was a few doors off of Fifth Avenue in East Sixty-third Street, and I was the caretaker. What with Ma needing every cent, and room-rent being so high, I had taken on the job and was able to send her the difference, but naturally I wouldn't care for anyone to know about it, not if I could help it.



"What say we go over to the White Light Cafeteria?" says George. Something inside me fell with a thud. Just imagine!

The house was a gem, as the saying goes, being all fixed up in the most modern way by a high-class decorator, and it belonged to a genuine swell couple called Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Langworthy, who spent about two months of the year in it. I had seen an ad in the paper for caretaker, and thought I'd take a chance, and when Mrs. Langworthy saw me, she was tickled half to death.

"We are on our way to Europe," she says, " and your taking charge will eliminate all the bother of putting away things. I shall leave the house practically as it is, for I can see that you are a decent young woman, and trustworthy. Reach me through the American Express Company in Paris, but for heaven's sake, don't unless you have to!"

It was early spring when I got the job, and I was living in that basement, getting up early and sweeping the sidewalk and so forth, before I went down to Madame's. Of course it was the Langworthys' phonograph I had bought the record for, and when I let myself in this evening, I put it on at once and got dressed to it, thinking I was pretty near the luckiest girl in the world. Here at last was something like a good time coming to me!

"After all," I thought, "Eddie is kind of right about bluffing, at that. I'm proving it, by not leaving him come here after me."

On the way out, I finally posted my letter to George.

Once things get started in New York, they sure do move quick, and this was true with I and Eddie Schwartz. He bought me a swell meal, and we danced a lot under the paper flowers with the lights in them, and before we quit for the night, we was talking real intimate.

"See here, Connie!" he says to me. "The trouble with you is, you don't



"Say, don't they treat you good, though!" says I. "I think it's real considerate, sending a closed private car."

push yourself enough. You could knock 'em dead if you went about it right. A girl as handsome as you ought to be getting something out of it."

"Well," I says, "the Follies aint my speed, Eddie, even if I could get into them. I got no talent of any kind, only for making raised doughnuts, and I'm a fair manicure. So unless Mr. Astor or somebody was to ask me to marry them, I don't see where I'm to get it."

"You're darn pretty," says Eddie excitedly, "—figure and all; and positive, you are the most refined-looking girl I ever seen, with that thin nose and white skin and all that red hair. . . . . Say! I got it! How about this bathing-beauty contest they are getting up?"

"Oh, Eddie! I couldn't!" I says. "Why, I'd feel like a fool!"

"But suppose you won?" he come back to me. "I guess you'd feel like a fool to be Miss America, wouldn't you? And say, listen! There's a two-thousand-dollar cash prize this year, as well as the cup. The Paxwell Complexion Powder Company are offering it."

"But I'd never win in this world!" I says.

"I aint so sure!" says he, looking at me critical. "Of course, you'd have competition, all right, but working right there in a beauty-parlor, you got every advantage for fixing up. Why don't you send in your picture? They can't do worse than mail it back."

"Oh, Eddie," I says, "how lovely! Do you really think I'm as good-looking as all that? Honest?"

"I sure do!" he says. "But there aint no use being sentimental about it. The thing is, get the judges to see you, and then bluff 'em into giving you the prize."

Well, when I got home, although it was real late and my feet was sore from dancing all night, I kept 'em working another while, and walked up and down the long narrow parlors where the hot, dusty wind come puffing in from the street—bluffing at coolness! And I thought to myself, oh, boy, maybe Atlantic City wouldn't be so bad for a week, in a one-piece suit, making friends, and your picture in the paper, not to speak of the cash!

I didn't have any decent photo, but only a snap which Katie, the other manicure, had taken on the beach down to Coney. But there is something kind of fascinates a person about being told they are the cat's meow, especially when it is a handsome young sheik like Eddie Schwartz that passes the remark. And so by one o'clock that night I had decided to take a chance.

Once my mind was made up, I acted quick, before allowing myself time to back out. I took a sheet of Mrs. Langworthy's handsome note-paper with the engraved address on it, wrote out my name and age, slipped the snapshot in the envelope with it and dropped the letter in the corner box before I went to bed.

I'll tell the world that next morning while I was sweeping the sidewalk I give that mail-box the nervous eye, wishing I could take back the letter, but Gawd knows you can't take back a letter out of the mail much easier than you can stick back the nail on a manicured finger if you happen to file off more than the customer wanted. And so the best I could do was put it out of my mind as completely as a doctor's bill and go on my regular job with a smile. But the contest didn't stay put; it kept bounding up in my mind like a rubber ball or a guilty

conscience or something, in spite of the fact that all that week things went along the same as if there hadn't been no such thing as a bathing-beauty contest in the world, so far as hearing anything from the newspaper to which my photo had gone was concerned. I seen Eddie every day, and he was excited about it as if his own picture was in, and he kept giving me good advice, and suggesting things about my complexion, my style and all that. But nothing further happened until one morning I come to work and found a letter from George Brady telling me he would be down by the time I got this, and would stop around for me after work and take me out to put on the old feed-bag, and he was lovingly mine.

George taking for granted that I wouldn't be dated up, kind of got me a little sore right away. But I thought, oh, well, out-of-towners, they always seem to think a person is setting around waiting for them; but a free feed is gratis oats any night. Also I was really glad he was coming. He always made me feel a comfortable, safe kind of way which was pleasant if not exciting—which something you are sure of never is. He showed up all smiles, his eyes beaming at me through his glasses that gave him such a respectable look. If George had only had more the appearance of a sport, and at the same time been as good as he was, why, he would have had me cuckoo over him long ago. That's the only trouble with being respectable—you too often look the part.

"Connie!" he hollered, as I come out onto the street. "Oh, girl! Maybe I'm not glad to see you!"

"Two orders of that," I says. And for a minute we stood holding both hands in spite of his radio-demonstration case and my vanity, the two of us wrapped in a kind of instinctive glow like when you come home to a steady fire in the grate. Only, of course, this was July on West Forty-second.

"Well, where do we eat?" I says. "I'm starved!"

"That's good!" says George. "I want to buy everything from soup to nuts. What say we go over to the White Light Cafeteria? Or maybe you'd like this big new Automat they tell about?"

Well, at them words something inside me fell with a dull thud. Just imagine! It reminded me of Eddie's speed, right away. But of course all I could do was pick the cafeteria, and take up



I had to appear against the last year's winner, perfect peach of a white dress, I thought:



"Thank you, Mr. Blandon," I says. "Thank you for giving me this opportunity to do the right thing."

a census of George all the way over to it, while I was finding out, at the same time, that Ma was working hard, which I already suspected, that Pa was about the same, only he could move his head a little more now, that the postmistress had run off with the doctor, and that crops looked good. George didn't say a word about himself until we had slid our trays past the pie and the checker, and grabbed off the side-table farthest away from the phonograph.

"Honey baby," says George, as soon as we got settled, "I got a little piece of what I hope you'll say is good news. The Company is taking me off the road and putting me in the office. I'm going to have a whack at some of the big stuff—installing a new station for them, and that's going to mean a raise. In fact, the old pay-envelope was heavier yesterday, and that's one reason I'm here!"

Well, my jaws pretty near left off my food and fell apart.

"George Brady!" I says. "And so you get reckless and blow me to a dinner in a cafeteria! You waster!" George seen I wasn't altogether joking and his face fell about a mile.

"Aw, Connie!" he says. "You don't understand, dear. I do it to save money—not for myself but for us. You must realize I'm just crazy to get enough saved so's we can have a real home. It's been the one thing I've wanted all my life—a home with you. Don't think I'm stingy, please."



and when I seen her fatal classic beauty, in a "Who cares for a redhead alongside a blonde?"

"It aint that, George," I says wisely. "It's just that I think you got the wrong dope. I used to think that way too, but I've learned different. Bluff is what gets you by, these days. You are what people see. The public can only judge by appearances."

"Appearances wont put any money in the bank," says George seriously, "and that don't sound much like you, either, Connie."

"Well, I used to live in the country too," I says, "but now I'm commencing to get wised up. As a friend of mine says, the modern home is where you press your only pants."

"Somebody has been telling you wrong," says George, giving me a sharp look. "Who is this friend, anyways? I don't know as I like you going out with anybody but me."

Can you imagine!

"Oh, is that so!" says I. "Let me tell you, he's at least up to the minute, which you are not, George Brady. And I'm sure I don't know where you get off with telling me I can't go out if I like."

"That's neither here nor there," says George. "The both of us, Con, you and me, are just ordinary folks that have got to work and save in order to make good. We haven't much chance of pulling a fortune out of the world overnight."

"You may not have," I says, "but I aint so sure about me! I need some big money for Pa's doctors, and—and for myself, and I'm willing to take a chance. Maybe I wont win, but nobody can say I didn't try."

"Win what?" says George, looking scared.

"The beauty contest," I says, tossing back my head, not able to stop myself now. "I sent in my picture, and if I win it, I get two thousand dollars, and goodness knows what else besides!"

Well, George burst right out laughing, at that. It was the worst thing he could of done.

"Why, you dear, silly kid!" he says. "This city has your bean turned entirely!"

"Oh, is that so, George Brady!" I says, getting up and throwing down my napkin. "Well, I may not win, but at least I am sport enough to *try* for the high spots!"

"Sit down, Constance!" says George sharply. "I forbid my future wife to go in for any such nonsense. Nobody says you aint a beauty, my dear, but I don't want you making a fool out of yourself."

"I wont sit down," I says, "and I wont be forbidden, neither! I'm through!"

There was a awful quiet moment between us in spite of the jazz number on the electric phonograph blatting away, and then George threw down his napkin too.

"All right, Connie," he says. "I got old-fashioned ideas, I guess, but it seems to me loyalty to your steady company, and a good home with love, at the end of a little spell of saving and simple living, is more worth while than—than that thing over there!" He pointed at the phonograph, and after a second, picked his hat off the rack.

"You think it over," he says. "I'll be glad to hear from you if you change your mind. But I wont ask you again to marry me. The next time it will have to be you who does the asking!"

"I'd die first!" I says. "Good-by!" With which I marched out and left him standing there, my heart hurting me all the way to Sixty-third Street, and wishing I could take back a lot I had said, but ashamed to even try. Well, there was one thing pretty sure: George wouldn't leave me go without a struggle; he'd be back, looking me up, before long. That was a cinch—maybe! If only he'd do a little thinking over, himself, he'd realize that I wanted to win that prize money for my folks, more even than for myself. But I wasn't going to explain it if he couldn't judge for his own self.

When I reached the house, there was a letter waiting for me that put George's soreness out of my head for the time, on



"You!" he says. "Why, yes, of course, I remember seeing your picture in the paper."

account it was from the Morning *Climax*, the newspaper where I had sent my picture. The letter was marked "Editorial Office," and was personally signed.

"My dear Miss Du Bois," it says. "Your picture has been selected by the judges as one of the ten best offered in our Bathing-beauty Contest. Will you please come to the Goldmeyer Theater tomorrow evening at eight o'clock promptly, for the elimination test? It will be necessary to wear a swimming-costume, your head uncovered. We will send a limousine for you, unless you notify us not to do so. —Cordially yours, T. H. Johnson, Beauty Editor."

JUST how I lived through the next day is more than I can tell. I didn't say a word down to Madame's about being called, but I sure did want to tell Eddie, and at noon I run down to the music store. But for once he was home—with a sick headache, his side-kick told me with a wink.

When evening come, I climbed into my bathing-suit, slipped on a wrap, and with my hair dressed special by Madame herself, who did all us girls' heads once a week for the ad, and this was luckily the day for it—well, I sat there waiting for the car without, so it felt, a interested friend in the world. Then the limousine showed up, and it was a livery one in the sense that it had a liveried chauffeur, and looked like it was at least the Vanderbilts' own. Then, before I knew it, I was in the dressing-room of the theater along with a lot of girls, being handed a number to hang around my neck.

"For the luva mud, do we have to wait all night?" says one girl, after about ten minutes.

"Say, don't they treat you good, though!" says I. "I think it's real considerate, sending a closed private car after you." The girl give me a stare.

"Huh! The only private car I come in was the subway!" she says with a snort. "I'd like to know how you get that way!"

Well, after that, I kind of wondered myself, but I didn't get no chance to discuss it further, on account we was called, just then, and falling into line, we filed slowly out onto the stage, the lights full on us, and the judges in a stage-box, whispering, their heads together, while a lad with a megaphone called for us to circle, pose, stand in line, and all that.

Well, I don't know as I ever felt any more foolish or uncomfortable in my life, and I kept my eyes down so's all I could see was the healthy pair of legs on Miss Goldstein, Entry Number Six, which walked confident and sassy, just ahead of me. The theater was dark—I could realize that; but it was full of people. I felt as if I was being shoved around in a show-window at night. I hadn't even any idea how the choosing was to be done, and so when the megaphone-bird yells for Number Three to leave the stage, I thought the girl who's number that was, had won. Then Four and Nine was sent out, quick, and then Two, and One, and so on, until finally there was me standing on the stage all by myself, and believe me, it was all I could do not to burst out crying, because while I am not conceited, still and all, it didn't feel so good to be absolutely last choice.

Then just when suicide of mortification had become my middle name, one of the Johns in the judges' box got up and started to making a speech. He stood with one foot on the stage, and one on the edge of the box, and pulled a line about the Stars and Stripes, and the glory of American womanhood, and then he come over and took me by the hand and led me toward the footlights.

"And now," he shouts, "it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you our winning number—Miss Constance Du Bois, who from now on will be better known to you as Miss New York!"

Can you imagine! Well, the house-lights went on, and first thing I knew, I was being shook hands with, wholesale. I had won a hundred per cent. Oh, boy! I guess I was crazy in the head, some! The next half-hour was like a whirlwind, and then I found myself back in the limousine with the editor. It seems it was his private one, and his wife come along and a few others, and they all saw me home. I had the front door key with me, and run gayly up the steps while Mr. Editor unlocked it, and I stood waving them good-night until they drove away, and then shut myself in and leaned against the door, gasping for breath.

Well, I'll tell the cock-eyed world I didn't get a whole lot of sleep the first part of that night. But when I did fall for the sandman, I fell good and plenty, and only woke up when the sun began pestering me into noticing that it was after nine.

Madame opened up at eight-thirty on account some of our clients liked to stop in on their way to work, and believe me, she was some cracked record when a person was late getting there. I come out of my bed in the basement like the devil himself was after me, and dressed without any fussing at all. Then I made one rush for the basement door, intending to do without breakfast. When I opened it, the morning paper hit me full in the face, and when I picked it off, there was myself staring at me from the front page.

A person would be more than human if they could of resisted that, and so, thinking, oh, well, I am so late now I might as well be killed for a steak as a lamb-chop, or whatever the old saying is, I sat down to read the dope, and this is what I got:

SOCIETY GIRL WINS BEAUTY CONTEST

Miss Constance Du Bois of East Sixty-third Street and Fifth Ave. carries off honors from crowd of lovely working-girls. Very modest about her victory.

"This is something I never dreamed of doing until my friends suggested it," said Miss Du Bois, society débutante and cousin of Mr. and Mrs. Langworthy of 5½ East Sixty-third Street, to the *Climax* reporter last night. "But I am honored to think that my home city should choose me to represent it in the national contest at Atlantic City. I hope I can win, but chiefly in order to make good the confidence that has been shown in me."

Can you imagine! Of course I hadn't said any such thing. In fact I had been so scared and excited I had kept my mouth pretty well shut the whole time, only for "Yes," "No," and "I'm so glad." So I was a society deb, eh? Sweet patootie! I went on and read some more:

For the first time since the inauguration of the annual bathing-beauty contest, society has shown a direct interest. Never before has a member of the four hundred entered, and added interest is given to Miss Du Bois' participation by the fact that she has not yet been formally introduced to New York's most exclusive set.

"Well, that last's the truth anyways," I interrupted myself long enough to think. The paper went on:

Her cousins, however, in whose house she is at present stopping, are internationally known in the best circles, and the management of the contest are delighted by the broader interest which their suggesting the entry of their young relative indicates.

So the Langworthys had suggested it! Suffering cats, and I had read many a murder and scandal in this very paper and swallowed it for the truth!

WELL, there was a lot more to the piece, about my personal looks, and so forth, but I didn't get a chance to read it just then. The telephone rang, practically for the first time since I had been caretaker, and when I answered, there was Madame's voice at the other end.

"Is that you, Miss Du Bois?" says she that had never yet called me anything but dearie. "This is Madame Estelle speaking. I've just seen the paper, and I want to congratulate you!"

"Thank you, Madame!" I says, trembling. "Oh, I'm so sorry I'm late. I—"

"Oh, please don't mention it!" says Madame. "Of course we don't expect you down today. Why you ever came to work here at all is more than I can understand. You had us all fooled, dearie—I should say Miss Du Bois! But there! I suppose you had some good reason for pretending to be a manicure!"

"But I am, Madame!" I wailed, scared she would fire me. "I want to go on with you!"

"Certainly, just as long as you care to, dear Miss Du Bois!" came the honey accents over the wire. "We'd just love to have you. I wont keep you any longer now! I know you must be awful busy today. Come in whenever you get good and ready, and your old friends will welcome you."

Can you imagine!

Then she hung up, and I hung on to the transmitter tight for a minute, for fear I would dive right into it, I was that weak. There was plainly no use arguing with Madame. She believed in newspapers and fortune-tellers and hair-removers, and goodness knew what not, so why try to explain?

Well, I didn't get to do any overtime on this particular worry, because right away the doorbell rung. What on earth it would be I didn't know, but I took a slant out the window before I answered. There by the curb was parked a smart-looking delivery-car from East and Castell, the swell dressmakers on West 57th Street, and a boy with buttons all up and down the front of him was standing on the steps, whistling, a big box under his arm. You can bet I made for the opening *(Continued on page 110)*

If Harold Mac Grath were not a great story-teller, he'd be a great pianist. "Wish I had a new piano," said he to the writer of this paragraph as the two sat one day in the music-room of the author's charming home in Syracuse. "Easy," he was told. "Send the Red Book a story and buy yourself a new one with the check." This is the story, and with the check for it Mac did buy a new piano. And it's because he's an artist that he gave a musical note to the tale.

Illustrated
by
Lester Ralph



"What's the big idea?" she asked. "Yours is evidently wrong," he replied. "Do you play or don't you?"

By

Harold Mac Grath

Mazurka

AS she looked at her brother's thin, handsome face, there was mingled anger and pity in Mrs. Carnovan's fine blue eyes. The anger was aroused by his stubborn refusal to accept the inevitable; the pity was stirred by the basic cause of this stubbornness. These creative geniuses, high-strung and imaginative, were most difficult to handle. Silk and steel: she rather liked the simile. Away back in his childhood, he had been silk and steel.

"You're a fool, Geordie, to shut yourself away from human beings like this."

"We've threshed that out a dozen times, Puss. What's the use of turning it over and over?"

Mallory held a folded newspaper in his right hand, and with this he tapped the piano against which he leaned. His left hand was hidden in the pocket of his velvet lounging-jacket.

"It isn't as if you'd always been like this," went on Mrs. Carnovan. "Before the war, something was always going on in the studio here." She waved her hand indirectly toward the paintings and sketches against the tapestried walls. "You are a great painter, Geordie. You are a great musician too. God gave you about everything—genius, money, good looks."

"And one day took them away." Mallory shrugged.

"Why, Geordie, you can still paint wonderfully. You haven't

been up to the house in two months. We, who love you! That isn't kind. You never even telephone how-d'ye-do. I have to come down here to find out whether you're alive or dead. And I worry, day in and day out."

His face softened. "Dear Puss, if I could change my nature, I would."

"But your genius! You owe it to the world."

"I have paid my debt to the world." The bitterness in his soul broke forth in a savage note. "These arguments tear me to pieces. I wish to God you would not harp on the subject. I can't hold my palette. I have to set it on a stand under the canvas; and the awkwardness of it keeps the fury boiling in me. So my inspirations are ashes before I begin. And I can't play any more. I can't touch the piano. Always, when I was tired and discontented, I used to sit down and play my troubles away."

"Geordie, in the war you were a brave man. But you do not take up life bravely now."

His fury having subsided, he shrugged.

"If you were poor—" his sister went on.

"But I'm not poor," he interrupted. "We get nowhere by supposition. I can't give away my money to test your theory." His fury rose again, and his eyes burned. "If my arm had gone, I would have taken it like a sport; but to have all the sense of feeling, and still to be one-handed all the rest of my life! Oh, I can wriggle the fingers, make a fist of it; but that's all. I loved Grace; or thought I did. When she saw what had happened to me, she fainted—not out of pity, but at the thought of going through life with a cripple. So I let her go."

"It was for your country," said Mrs. Carnovan, tears in her eyes. "No one who loved you would ever mind, Geordie."

"I'm a damned fool, Puss, but I can't change the fact."

"Couldn't you work if you had some one to play for you?" she asked.

"Yes."

He laughed, and stooped for the newspaper which he had dropped.

"A bit odd, that you should suggest that. The notion has been boiling in my head for several days. But I tell you frankly, Puss, I couldn't tolerate a man here, no matter how well he played. In a little he would be smoking cigarettes and talking. Besides, I could not find a good man pianist. If he were good, he'd scorn this kind of work."

"But a woman—alone with you here?"

"Oh, that could be made proper enough. Miss Challoner, who has the studio below, could be induced to come up for an hour, three or four times a week. She is sixty, gray-haired and sensible. So the affair would have no color to it. I don't want anyone to play while I work. It's when I lay down the brushes. She can be as homely as a potato, if she can play the piano."

A woman. Mrs. Carnovan's distaste was imminent of expression. There were so many kinds of women in New York; and her brother George was so guileless, for all his birth and station. It did not matter that he was thirty-seven; he would be easy prey to a clever, unscrupulous woman. There were, she knew, many fine women musicians in town, struggling for sustenance; but none of these, aware of the countless pitfalls in New York, would step across yonder threshold.



It came to him that Sonia was telling him something she dared not utter vocally. There was a tragic note in everything she played.

But her second thought, stepping on the heels of the first, repressed the words that flew to her lips. She could see that he was excited over the notion. Adventure, the unknown! A beautiful woman to sit there at the piano and to play for him when he was moody and lonely. A dangerous business; and yet it might be the very thing to pull him back into the world again.

"How will you go about it?" she asked.

He flourished the newspaper, smiling.

Here again she felt dismayed. Supposing some inquisitive reporter saw the advertisement and investigated, giving his story an oblique twist? Sensation, everywhere sensation! Murder a person's reputation on a mere supposition, and apologize on the morning of the obsequies: gentle Geordie, hauled into the limelight under such conditions!

"I don't like it, Geordie. Wouldn't one of those player-pianos do?"

"For a person who loves good music but cannot play—yes.



But to hear a Brahms rhapsody played a hundred times alike! I must have the human touch—some one to explore my moods. Sounds foolish, but that's the way it is."

She understood that argument would be in vain: her brother had set his heart upon this adventure, come ill or good. After all, the conventional side was negligible; her distress was enlivened by the fear that he might be hurt again. She was positive that he still nursed the hurt given him by the other woman.

"All right, Geordie. But you must let me know what happens. If I didn't love you—"

"Dear old Puss!" Mallory put his arms around her and kissed her. "You haven't changed in twenty years. Always trying to stand between me and buffets. What the deuce! If I find a woman who plays to my content, Miss Challoner will be in the corner there. Besides, I've a notion I'll be vastly amused."

"I shall want to see her."

"You certainly shall."

Mallory lived in one of the numbered streets, far downtown. It was a street of vanished glories—an old maid, living in genteel poverty, you might say. The house was three stories, brick and marble, with an iron fence, and a hand's-width of grass in between. All through the summer this bit of grass caught your eye and refreshed it.

The house was Mallory's, one among the many he shared with his sister; for their divided fortune lay in real-estate, scattered hither and yon about the city. The ground floor was the studio of a sculptor; the second floor was the home and workshop of Miss Challoner, a famous illustrator; the loft was Mallory's. In that day—that of the building of the house—they gave you height along with substantiality. Mallory had remodeled the floor to his taste: all the comforts of home, with his studio across the threshold.

He painted landscapes and water-scenes—very well, too. Sometimes he sold a painting; sometimes he donated one to upstate public libraries. He was strangely indifferent about rewards. If he found himself happy after finishing a painting, that was sufficient. He had studied in Paris, Rome, Florence and Vienna, both at art and at music. As an amateur on the piano, he had won the respect of many a famous professional.

He resembled his sister in looks: handsome, brown-haired, blue-eyed, all lines as manly as hers were womanly; of medium height and slender, but with an almost inexhaustible store of nervous energy which had made him a formidable soldier. Stolidity makes a good defense, but it never wins any great battles.

When first the notion entered his mind about hiring a woman to play for him, the notion had been of a negligible character; but it had returned and returned again, more compelling, less negligible, on each return. He had not the least suspicion what the matter was—that he had grown desperately lonely and shy.

He had already asked Miss Challoner if she would play chaperon; and the illustrator had laughingly agreed. Thus a harbor had been established for the derelicts that were bound to enter port.

Did he wish the unknown woman beautiful and young? For the life of him, he could not say. He did want music, the kind of music he loved; he was sure on this point. If the woman turned out to be agreeable to the eye, so much the better.

Later, he found himself wrangling with Miss Challoner about the wording of the advertisement.

"If you put an advertisement in the papers that you wanted a model, it would not stir a ripple of curiosity," said Miss Challoner. "But to want a lady pianist from four till five, three times the week, with just the street and door-number—no; that wont do."

"Good Lord, you don't expect me to use my name, do you?" he expostulated.

"My dear boy, this is New York. If you leave a single loophole for curiosity to enter—bang, it will enter! It's all above-board, isn't it?"

"But people who know me will think me a fool."

"Well, you wanted my advice; I have given it. I imagine I'll have a lot of fun playing chaperon. I'll cuddle up in a shadowy corner and *'ahem'* at the proper time." Miss Challoner laughed. "Tell me exactly what you want. I'm old enough to be your mother—and I wish I were."

"I want a woman to play the piano after I've quit work. I

don't want to talk to her; I don't even want to know her name. I don't want any credentials. I want music."

When he was gone back to his studio, Miss Challoner approached her window and looked out. She smiled, perhaps a little sadly. Spring—it was spring outside. Year in and year out, she felt the spring. To be sure, the urgings grew feebler and feebler; yet still she felt the recurrent longing. Once upon a time she had known what this longing signified; now it always puzzled her.

Spring. He thought it was music he wanted. Poor boy, it was only spring calling, and he had not known exactly how to answer. He was thirty-seven? What had that to do with it? The Call laughed at years and locksmiths.

For all her sixty years of single blessedness, she was still a romantical fool; and the proof of it was, she was lending herself to a comedy that would fizzle out after the first act. Since when did true adventure come and sit on one's doorstep by invitation?

She returned to her easel. Children. For thirty years she had drawn children and babies for serials, short stories, magazine-covers and books. Children: the only kind she would ever have, children that became forgotten orphans the moment they passed from the studio. She laughed, understandingly. That was a child upstairs; hence, her interest. . . . .

Three afternoons later, at half after three, she knocked and was admitted into Mallory's studio by Kuroki the Jap. She found her host pacing to and fro, and shrewdly suspected what the state of his mind was. Already he was regretting; but there was no evidence that he would not go on.

"You are going through with it?"

"Absolutely. I'm a fool, but a stubborn one."

"Don't look at it that way. You're going to be amused and vastly astonished. And you're going to be tortured, too. What are you going to do with the others who follow the one you select?" she asked. "Something must be done to fend them off."

"I hadn't thought of that," answered Mallory, alarm flitting across his face. "I'll pin a card under the letter-box."

"Well, I'll be getting into my chair," said Miss Challoner.

This chair was beyond the piano, perfectly hidden from the eyes of any entering the door. Miss Challoner wanted it so, and he made no inquiries into her reasons.

Promptly at four the tragedy began—for it was a tragedy, of broken dreams, of hope that renewed itself only to fall shattered again. For years Mallory had moved among those of his kind, or he had made a hermit of himself. He wasn't ignorant of the fact that there existed another world; he had only forgotten it. Some of this world was now to pass in review and shock him indescribably.

Miss Challoner, out of her worldly wisdom, sensed something of what would probably be the outcome of this queer business: because the boy was tender-hearted, he would hire some one who neither pleased his eye nor his ear.

Presently a young woman crossed the threshold. Her expression was rather mousy. You have seen a mouse peek out of its knothole to get wind of a possible cat? Such was this young woman's expression. Seeing no figurative cat, she smiled easily.

"You advertised for a pianist?"

"Yes." Mallory was certain that if he approached her, she would exhale the stiff odor of cheap perfume. "Play," he said, with a gesture toward the grand piano. He was going to give them all a chance.

The girl walked over to the instrument and touched a few keys without sitting down. She then turned a pair of shallow blue eyes upon Mallory, and laughed.

"What's the big idea?" she asked impudently.

"Yours is evidently wrong," he replied. "Do you play or don't you?"

Miss Challoner stood up. The girl saw her and backed slowly to the door, through which she vanished forever more.

"I expected that," said Miss Challoner. "There will be more like her, and some of them worse. The poor thing!"



He was in time to see the bull-whip flash..... And then something infinitely proper happened to Joseph Wieniawski. The walls fell upon him.

"I'll go through with it. To those who try to please me, I'll give ten dollars."

"You needn't worry about that type. All I'll have to do will be to stand up."

"I feel like a fool, dragging you into this."

"Young man, I'm going to have the time of my life. There goes the bell."

Between four and half after five, six women stood trial and failed. Two of them were pretty, but they played mechanically and had no knowledge of pedals. Another had fine technique, but was soulless. The hands of the fourth were hopeless. The fifth was a middle-aged woman who played Beethoven with the



same expression one gave to finger exercises. The sixth was a vocal accompanist. To each he gave ten dollars, together with profound pity.

"Discouraged?" Miss Challoner asked.

"No—only astonished."

"Ah, I see. Young man, I like you. It was not an easy thing to turn away those women to whom thirty a week would be a godsend. But if you keep this up, it's bound to cost you a pretty penny."

"What did you think of them?" he countered.

"Exactly what you thought: that the young woman you are seeking had not come today."

"Oh, she needn't be pretty nor young," he said, covering his embarrassment by reaching for his pipe. "I want a real musician or nothing. Do you know, I've been very selfish."

"I'm sure of it. You have had your first lesson in philanthropy. There is always some one worse off in the world than you. This adventure is largely going to help you to forget. That's why I entered it in the capacity of dragon."

Mallory paced and smoked. Presently he halted.

"You'll come tomorrow?"

"Until the play is finished."

"I'm very grateful."

"The pleasure is mine."

The second day went by precisely as the first: seven disappointments and seven times ten dollars. But on the beginning of the third day the City of New York took a hand in the game, represented by a uniformed policeman.

"Say, what's goin' on here? Come across."

"I'll not accept that tone from any man on God's earth," cried Mallory wrathfully. "You speak civilly, or clear out."

This was Miss Challoner's cue to rise from her chair; but the belligerent note in Mallory's tones decided her to wait a minute or two.

"I was sent here to find out what's goin' on. If you wont tell me, why, you'll come along and tell it to the judge. Take your pick," grumbled the policeman.

"My advertisement states that I wish to hire a woman familiar with classical music. I see no crime in that."

"Huh!" said the policeman skeptically. "Mebbe you aint gonna offer a fine job as concert player or in grand opera? Ye-ah! You're always puttin' it over in some new way."

"Very good," said Mallory. "I'll get my hat, and we'll talk it over with the judge."

He was boiling with fury, a mixed fury. To have gone into this thing without examining all the possibilities, to have had his pity stirred profoundly, and now to have the law enter into his private affairs!

"No," said Miss Challoner, who had heard enough.

The policeman, beholding this handsome white-haired woman, lost momentarily the control of his jaw, which sagged comically.

"Mr. Mallory should tell you that he wanted a first-class pianist to play after his day's work is done. He was himself a fine musician, but the war has disabled him, and he cannot play the piano any more."

(Continued on page 134)



The Water Bottle

Illustrated by R. L. Lambdin

The first story ever written by the author of this vivid picture of the high points in two opposing human lives was printed by hand in a notebook when its writer was seven years old. Innumerable poems in that same little blue notebook ensued. A newspaper experience came later, followed by years of free-lance writing that raised the author to her present high position in the ranks of fiction writers.

"PUT out the sun! Put out the sun!" The voice had been shouting this for hours. "Put out the sun! Put out the sun!" Sometimes the words came so jumbled together that they were no more than a string of senseless sound; sometimes they were separated with long intervals. Each time, with a perfectly fresh astonishment, Hatch recognized the voice as his own.

Toward mid-afternoon the words set themselves to a droning tune, arranged themselves to a rhythm and melody ancient as the hills. Hatch saw them as a row of melancholy black figures, jigging and scraping among the rocks where the heat-haze quivered with a hypnotic regularity, and growing always larger and clearer as time passed. They were forever approaching, but never quite reached him. He could see their long black hands waving in time, their heads thrown back; yet they did not *sing* the tune; they *were* the tune.

> "Oh, put out de sun, Lawd, and let me lie in darkness,
> Oh, put out de sun, Lawd, and let me lie in darkness,
> Oh, put out de sun, Lawd, and let me lie in darkness,
> In de darkness such a long way from home—"

"That's it, that's it," muttered the other Hatch, the silent Hatch, twitching his fingers in time. "Go on, go on. Keep on!



Which was the nearer? Hatch tried to shout: "I'll smash you, you bald-headed old bird, if you touch it."

By

M. L. C. Pickthall

'*Oh*, put out the *sun*, Lord!' " he repeated over and over again:

"Oh, put out de sun, Lawd, like
Moses and de candle,
Oh, put out de sun, Lawd, like
Moses and de candle,
Oh, put out de sun, Lawd, like
Moses and de candle,
For I doesn't need no light
upon my road."

"That's it," muttered Hatch, "that ought to do it." And the infinite sadness and loneliness of the tune overwhelmed him. He thought he lay crying like a child. But his eyes were dry as the dry hot sand blown against their lids.

"Oh, put out de sun, Lawd, and send de dark to hide me,
Oh, put out de sun, Lawd, and send de dark to hide me,
Oh, put out de sun, Lawd, and send de dark to hide me,
Hide me in de Holler of de Hand—"

And the sun *was* put out.

"That's done it," said Hatch to himself.

The hills drew closer suddenly, towering into the air. All day they had been bared, and cruel as hungry teeth; now they clustered tenderly as hooded angels, guarding with their wings the valley and all it held. The jigging figures vanished with the heat-quiver above the rocks. A wind breathed once, twice, thrice from the sea, sweet, in that place, as flowers in rain. A vast silence enfolded the vexed and aching earth, a silence that was of God.

Across the valley one voice rose, thin and unhuman as the wail of a bird, uplifted from the trampled scrub and thorn. "Allah, Allah, Allah!" Like flowing water, the silence made haste to cover it again. Hatch sighed and opened his eyes. He was revived by the shadow and the coolness as by water; his thoughts came home to him like birds. He whispered: "I've been going on a bit."

He rested silently, staring at the sky, aware for the first time that it was possible to rest, and wondering what was wrong with him.

He felt no pain, but was in the grip of a discomfort so deadly he would with gladness have exchanged it for pain. A star showed at the foot of the valley; it looked wet, as if new-washed from the sea, with a cool and clear shining; the sky was faintly shadowed as if with wings of rain, though it was no more than dust and smoke that hung against the growing stars. Hatch slid into a dream of rain, rain on the scorched scrub, rain on his upturned face, and he smiled with blackened lips as he dreamed.

"Allah! Allah! Allah!"

Hatch woke with a start from a five-minutes sleep, and muttered: "He's got his little bit too." He felt for his water-bottle with trembling fingers; it was shattered, only the neck and a rag of cloth remaining. He sighed patiently, and resumed his unthinking stare at the stars. There were many, but their light was cool and still.

"Allah! Allah!"

It was a cry for water. Hatch knew it, and was irritated by it. He said: "What does he want to squeal about it for, the blighter?" There was no answer. The last of the light drained from the hills, lay like a pool in the gully. Every change of the

air or the earth took on the appearance of water. Hatch groaned and stirred. He, the real Hatch, had seemed so separated from the heavy thing that had lain there and shouted and suffered through the hot hours, that he was rather surprised to find that his will yet had control over his body. With some trouble, he raised himself on his elbow and looked across the gully.

It was narrow here at the head, no more than a few yards across. In the dimples of the sand lay a few odds and ends of discarded equipment, along with two or three other discarded things that questioned the night with their silent lips. Hatch saw a rifle, a cartridge-belt, a coat, a round tin that his brain connected with peppermints—and the round flat shape of a water-bottle. His eyes steadied on it; immediately it grew to immense size. He saw nothing else: nothing else was left in the world to see. It blotted out the stars, hid the hills. There might be water in it!

WATER! Hatch set his teeth and turned over. It took him a long time, and a blind wave of blackness deeper than the night followed the effort, rolled over him, drenched him; little notes in it swung, gathered, grew to the little dancing figures that jigged against his eyeballs:

"All erbout de dark, Lawd, I hear de living waters,
All erbout de dark, Lawd, I hear de living waters,
All erbout de dark, Lawd, I hear de living waters
Where de wandering sheep shall lay dem down at last."

"Queer!" thought Hatch faintly. "I haven't thought of that old tune for years." He opened his eyes again, breathing in little gasps. The wave of darkness receded; he saw the stars once more, and the veiled soft hills; but under his cheek the sand was wet where the wave had been.

He saw the water-bottle too, and began to crawl toward it. The real, active, alive Hatch had immense trouble with the heavy, groaning thing that thirsted and suffered. He had to drag it along the sand. A huge resolve, a struggle that shook the soul, a mighty attempt that should have cleared the hills: and the thing that was also Edward Hatch moved an inch toward the water-bottle. The real Hatch could have wept and cursed; he even struck at the thing to hurry it up; and another wave of blackness followed, shot through with wandering music.

"Allah! Allah! Allah!"

On the edge of the slope Hatch raised his head; the thin cry sounded nearer; there was a faint movement in the shadow of the thorns across from him; a hand was lifted, black against the tender sky; a man's head followed, rigid and raised for an instant, like something cut out of black paper and pasted on the dying gold. He could see the open mouth, and the scalp-lock fallen back from the shaved head. Then it sank; the shadow seemed to stir; there was a rustle of sliding sand. Silence for a moment, then once more the monotonous cry, no stronger now than a chirp, "Allah—" Nothing less than the compassion of the Compassionate could have answered that appeal. Hatch shivered as he listened, but compassion scarcely came into his scheme of things at the moment.

"God," he also whispered, "the beggar's seen the water-bottle too!"

He sank his chin in the sand, breathing hard. Rage ran over him like a flame. It was *his* bottle; he'd seen it first. He mastered his body with that goad of rage, set his teeth, dug in his elbows, struggled gigantically, and gained a few inches. On the opposite slope the head was once more lifted, once more dropped; and he who besought the Compassionate had moved out from the shadows a hand's-breadth.

With burning eyes Hatch tried to measure the distances. Had the bald-headed beggar gained on him? He was not sure. Fear fluttered his heart till he nearly choked. Once more, with an enormous expenditure of energy, he thrust his elbows into the sand and heaved himself forward. On the opposite slope the other man did the same.

An insane anger possessed Hatch. He tried to rise to his knees and shout, but could only whisper dry and incoherent threats. The water-bottle was still plainly visible, its dark, round shape picked out plainly in the dusk. The other man lay face down on the slope, his arms, flat on the sand in front of him, stretched toward it. Even as Hatch looked came the familiar movements; he stirred again, and again, almost imperceptibly advanced.

"Not if I know it," whispered Hatch, trembling, "not while I'm here. . . . ." He also thrust himself on. But that clogging and delaying weight he dragged had grown heavier. He sank his chin in the sand again, and dry sobs of helplessness shook him.

"Lead me to de spring, Lawd, and lif' de cup unto me,
Lead me to de spring, Lawd, and lif' de cup unto me,
Lead me to de spring, Lawd, and lif' de cup unto me,
For I hasn't had no drink upon de road—"

"And that's the truth," whimpered Hatch, "—not a drop."

He won, with infinite hardship, another hand's-breadth. Between him and the water-bottle was a small thorny bush a few inches high; the bottle seemed so far away, that he fixed his eyes on the bush. A long interval, and he had gained the bush: he almost wept again in his foolish disappointment that it was not the bottle. Of course, the real Hatch knew it wouldn't be, but the other Hatch cried because the little bush was so dry and the spiny leaves pricked his face. A big earth-colored beetle lived in the bush, and fed on the leaves; Hatch wondered if its roots had found water, that it stood and lived, and a beetle lived on it, in the midst of all the dead sand. He broke a leaf, but it was as dry as if it were dead; he dug around the stem with his fingers, but the sand remained dry, dry as dust.

While he rested beside the dry bush, the other man had gained on him.

Furiously angry, Hatch began to shout. He knew he was making a great noise, but his enemy paid no attention. He stopped abruptly, realizing that it was no wonder. "For what am I shouting?" muttered the sensible Hatch. "What but 'Put out the sun, put out the sun!' And they've put it out long ago, and packed all the darkies away in a black box." The two Hatches were becoming entangled, confused; the box was visible, made of the very stuff of darkness, and all the little jigging figures packed away inside it in rows like dolls—rows and rows of dolls. When the wind blew over the black box, it stirred their hands, thin as dry leaves, and a single lonely note of music was blown along the sand by the wind. But generally they kept the lid on.

"Don't you be a fool," said Hatch sternly to himself, "you an' your boxes! Shout again, now you've got your wind—shout careful: 'You over there, let—that—bottle—alone—or I'll—bust—your—head—for—you!' That's it! Shout!" But when he stopped again, and listened to himself, he knew he had been crying once more: "Put out the sun, put out the sun." And the sun was gone for good; only the fringing stars revealed the outer cliffs. "Allah, Allah!" The other monotonous appeal was very faint. But the man was now at least a yard nearer the water-bottle than Hatch was.

"This wont do," said Hatch, with a desperate show of firmness, trembling as he lay. "This wont do. The beggar's more on the downhill than me, and it aint fair." The indifferent injustice of the universe again shook him almost to tears. "There's me, wanting that water so bad, and him on the downhill." He set his teeth again, heaved forward. He also was now on the downhill; with rapture he felt himself sliding in a little whisper of sand; he must have slid nearly six feet, plunging headfirst into another drenching wave of blackness tangled with the melancholy jigging figures of the song; some one must have snatched the lid off that box—quick as a conjuring trick.

"All erbout de dark, Lawd, I hear de Shepherd singing,
All erbout de dark, Lawd, I hear de Shepherd singing,
All erbout de dark, Lawd, I hear de Shepherd singing
Of de thirsty sheep that drink beside de stream."

HATCH came out of the wave, and the music drenched again, with a castaway rifle under his fingers and the sharp, smooth circle of the water-bottle almost on a level with his eyes. Behind it and beyond it—but very near—lay the dim, crawling thing that was the other man. With the regularity of a mechanism, he raised his head against the dull glimmer of the sand, following on the monotonous birdlike chirp. Hatch chuckled and drew the rifle toward him. "This'll do my shouting for me," he muttered joyfully. "This'll finish *your* job. As if I'd let you get that bottle!"

With infinite effort he got the rifle under his arm. The barrel shook and drooped, as if dragged toward the sand by some irresistible weight. Hatch cursed. There was a stone in front of him. He grunted and sweated and wriggled till he got the barrel propped on that, more or less covering the other man.

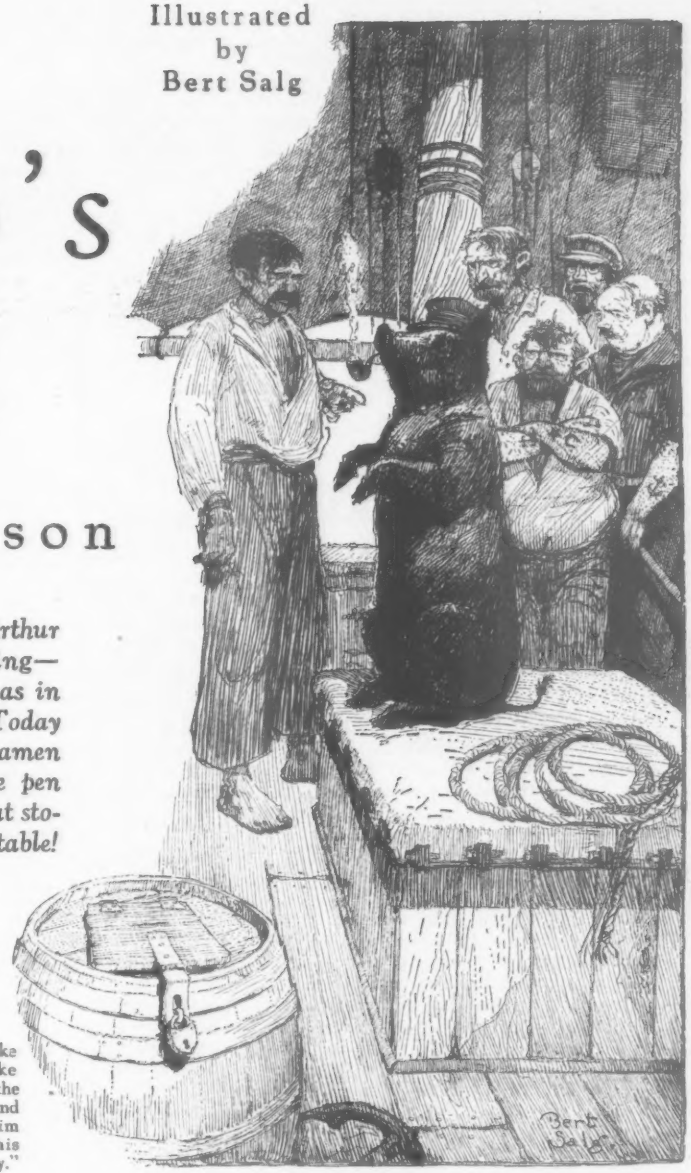
"This'll do your job!" shouted Hatch, and fired thrice. He heard the empty shells rattle on the hard sand. But when he looked, there were no shells; the other man was still creeping on; he was not hit; the rifle had not been fired—the magazine was empty. Frightened, Hatch abandoned it; it was all so unnatural, he thought. Still the other man crept on. "Hand to hand, then," said Hatch grimly, "hand to hand! As if I'd let you have my water-bottle!" He also crawled on. *(Continued on page 139)*

The Ship's PIG

Illustrated by Bert Salg

By Arthur Mason

When you read a sea-story by Arthur Mason, you are reading the real thing—for Mr. Mason sailed the Seven Seas in windjammers for thirty years. Today he completes the triumvirate of seamen who have won distinction with the pen—Conrad, McFee and Mason. What stories those three could tell around a table!



The mate spoke harshly: "Take that pipe out of the pig's mouth, and don't have him standing on his hind legs all day."

"COME on, men, come on—don't stand there monkeying with the pig. Hoist away on them halyards, and pull as if you meant it. This aint the place for shenanigan. Up with her! Another! There—bela-ay!"

The crew responded to the heavy-handed words of the mate of the bark *Cleecup* only long enough to set the main royal, then reverted as if magnetized to the hatch, where a black pig lay grunting in the sun. They simply could not resist him, even at the sure risk of the mate's displeasure, which vented itself upon all who distracted the affection of that fat porker from himself.

"Any one of them would stick a knife in him," thought the mate, "and let out his blood just for the fun of it and the grease they'd get. It's me that's the only friend he has, and he don't know it. Who taught him to roll on his back? Wasn't that me? Who taught him to trip up the cook when he comes aft with the food? Me again. Would they man the force-pumps morning and night to give him a bath? I should say not. Me again—the one that gives him his salt-horse sandwich every night, too! And yet just look at them tarry-handed loafers hanging over him, and him grunting as though they was old shipmates. Huh!"

He walked aft, disgusted with the pig and the heartless and frolicking sailors.

The crew of the *Cleecup* were of mixed nationalities; but Liverpool Harry, from length of service, and the fact that his lean and springy length had surprises for those who gainsaid him, was the approved sea-lawyer of the forecastle, and he held forth in the dog watch to his attentive mates on subjects that covered the length and breadth of sea-philosophy and creed.

Perhaps because they were in tropical seas where the lazy swinging of the canvas interferes with stern emotions, perhaps because the subject is in all weathers of supreme interest to a sailor; but at any rate, as six bells sounded seven o'clock by the ship's time, Liverpool Harry and his mates of the watch on deck were deep in discussion of the pig.

"It's getting so that a man carn't talk to the bloomin' pig any more. The mate's daffy over that porker. 'E says to me larst night, says 'e:

"'"'Arry, don't feed 'im 'ardtack; you'll ruin 'is blarsted teeth.'

"'"'Ow's that, Mr. Ranzor?' says I.

"'"'Carn't you see the tears runnin' hout of 'is heyes w'en 'e heats hit?'

"'"Blyme,' h'I hanswers, 'fust time h'I notices hit.'"

"Wot do 'e think about our teeth?" interrupted Quinn, a wasp-waisted, red-haired Irishman. "'Ow about the hardtack on us? We aint as good as pigs, heh? A nice howdydo on a lime-juicer! If I ever get off this hungry hooker, it's a nice place I'll be taking meself to live. Sure, an' I've seen thim ate rocks and thrive on thim."

An Italian sailor who answered to the name of Romo spoke to the pig:

"Open da mouth, now, open da mouth."

The pig yawned, and the crew regarded his teeth.

"What did I tell yez!" said Quinn. "Sure, an' you couldn't pull thim out wid a windlass; they're shpiked into his jawbone—an' clinched!"

An old bearded sailor cleared his throat; the others raised their heads to listen.

"The mate is right," he said solemnly. "Now, take me, here. Before I got to soaking me hardtack, I was losing teeth right and left. I didn't know where the blazes it were goin' to end. Now they aint no more dropping out."

He exhibited several tenuous fangs to the crew, who seemed to have seen them before. Their eyes went back to rest on the pig.

Liverpool Harry leaned down and scratched him behind the ears.

"We'll soak the biscuits for him, men," he said.

"Ye're a parcel o' damned fools," put in Quinn. "Sure, an' we'll be atin' the liver of him inside a month. I'll soak no biscuits for a pig; ye hear that?"

Romo got up from the hatch.

"I noa lika do, myself," he said, and so they argued until the mate came forward and spoke harshly:

"Take that pipe out of the pig's mouth, and don't have him standing on his hind legs all day. Don't you know he may be in for a crooked spine?"

"'E's 'avin' 'is hexercises, sir," said Harry.

"Never mind about that," snapped the mate; "drive the pig to his pen and pull the awning over him."

The *Cleecup* was bound to Manila from Newcastle with coal. She was an old wooden bark, and it was hard to find sailors that would sail on her. What with rumors of teredo, the hidden shipworm that takes the heart out of stanch wood to feed its growth, and then by stopping to look behind, as it were, lets in the spreading ocean to split the seams of a rotten hulk, it appeared that many crews had left their bunks for the rest of the voyage when they heard the bilge-water gurgling in the ship's pump, vowing that they would leave her in port, no matter what the risk to their hard-earned pay. So she was accustomed to shipping two crews a voyage, and the dignified old Captain would shake his bald and brown-spotted head until the few long hairs swayed, and sigh for the fine clipper ship he was to die still wishing for.

The crew whispered in the forecastle about the Captain, as all crews do, but on this ship it was with the tang of real gossip, for they maintained that he had Maori blood, which seemed to give him a kind of distinction among them. Besides, his dignity was great, and they loved dignity.

"'E's a pretty good sort of a old cove, 'e is; see 'ow 'e walks off w'en the pig looks at 'im?" observed Harry, and their regard increased for both skipper and pig, in spite of the mate's natural and professional jealousy; and the *Cleecup* was managing the round voyage with the same crew, for the second time. Meantime the pig had grown from a bottle pig, taken from his mother at a dangerously tender age and ministered to in every way, to an age which now was verging on toughness. Some tentative talk there had been from time to time of doing him into pork, but the idea was discredited, and the nays still controlled his destiny.

It was now ten days since the *Cleecup* had sailed away from Newcastle, Australia; then one morning in the Coral Sea certain things shaped themselves anxiously. The pig refused to roll on his back, or to sit up on his hind legs with a sailor's pipe in his mouth. There were, in fact, no playful tricks left in him that morning. The crew wore worried looks, and the mate followed the creature around the decks talking to him, wondering what had gone wrong, and making himself a torture to the crew on the subject of food. For once they didn't appear to resent it.

"'E carn't heat, sir," said Liverpool Harry sorrowfully. "Blyme if h'I knows wot's up wiv the bloomin' beggar.'

"He's sick," said Quinn.

"He noa," answered Romo; and while they speculated, they were amazed, for the pig tried there, before them all, to open the small gate leading into his pen. Not unusual in every pig, but phenomenal in this one, whose spirited resistance to being shut up always required the entire watch on deck to overcome, the fore hatch being far preferable as a resting-place, by reason of the affectionate demonstrations of hairy-handed sailors.

"Put him in the pen," said the mate savagely, and he walked aft to the poop. Some old blankets were brought up from the forecastle and spread in his pen; but when the pig walked in, and instead of lying atop of them, burrowed his way under them so that nothing but the tip of his nose and the flap of one ear showed, there arose a cry of alarm.

"Be the Saints above," shouted Quinn, "I have it now! Come here, me min, and l'ave the creature be. It'll be that there's a storm on the way, and it's me that has niver seen it fail whin a pig refused all aid and comfort and tuk to his bed. Always look out for a bit of a buzzard."

Liverpool Harry was strangely interested, and inquired luminously how the pig could know. Quinn, master of the situation, attracted even the watch below with the force of his oratory, and they came creeping out of their bunks and up on deck to listen, for the omen of storm and shipwreck ever takes new forms to the simple children of the sea, and holds them in the grasp of its mercilessness.

"Starboard fore braces, men!" came from the poop, and with eyes searching the skies some of them took in the yards, and some went lingeringly back to a gloomy rest.



There was no avoiding the war-canoes, and they took

Before the sun crossed the meridian that day, the wind came strong, and brought with it black clouds from away over in the direction where the Solomons lay in the convenience of tropic warmth and vegetation. As the waves came larger and more purposefully and the bark began to labor, the royals were clewed up and the outer jib hauled down, and before eight bells she was snugged down to the topsails.

The mate sounded the ship for water, and called all hands to man the pumps. The crew, omen-eyed, obeyed, and the alto of tearing gray seas and the howling winds went unaccompanied by the redeeming lead of their human voices. Occasional reports of the pig came from some scout who, with storm-straddled legs, ventured as far as the pen to look at him. The news was always the same, for in many hours he had neither eaten nor drunk, and his nose-tip and the edge of his ear were his only points of contact with the weather.

Darkness gloomed the hearts of the sailors. The waves, white-frilled, lashed the bark unmercifully. The Captain and the mate encouraged the crew to pump with all their might, and it was not until the pumps choked with cargo-coal that they lost heart.

"We're gone goslin's now," Quinn declared to the gaunt faces around him; "she's breaking up under us. Sure, an' the skin of her is opened up and the cargo-coal is loose in the bilges."

Lanterns were lighted, and the pumps were overhauled. It was of no use. They would not throw water, and the heart went out of crew and Captain.

"It's a hard place to be cast away," they heard him tell the mate.

"Aye, aye, sir, it's a pity we aren't farther north. It's the Solomon Islanders I'm thinking of. They are worse than a sinking ship or a lee shore."

"God help us," said the Captain; and he scrambled aft to the poop, where the waves seemed better disciplined.

Quinn gathered the crew around him, and bowed his neck to the seas that lashed him.



in their sail and prepared for whatever might be coming. The pig alone maintained his composure.

"Men," he shouted, "I have damned dirty news for ye. Does anny of yez know where yez are at all, at all? Yez don't, heh? Well, it'll be mesilf that'll be after tellin' ye!"

Like water-rats they hugged the speaker; their drooping ears caught his every word.

"Sure, an' it's close by the Solomon Islands ye are, wit' niver a hope at all but what if you're caught, you'll boil, like the whaler's crew that was twinty-foive min before the mast and not so much as a Blucher boot left to tell the tale."

The crew, when they heard this, simply stood and looked at each other through the spray. Then Romo detached himself from the dripping mass and went off to the forecastle, muttering in the language of his civilization. Hastily he opened his sea-chest, rummaging for his little treasure. Pitiful enough, it was—silver medals of saints and a lobster claw mounted in gold. The saints had some expression in their hollowed metal, something to get association of comfort from. The lobster claw, also a token of safety, seemed just a lobster claw, red and brittle.

"Goda helpa me," said Romo, and went on deck to find a raveling of rope to string his treasures on.

When daylight came, the storm had abated some and the sea was less vicious, but the bark was in a precarious condition. She was settling fast by the stern, and it was only a question of hours until she would disappear from the scene. A boat was lowered away, and as promptly smashed to sticks along the ship's side, leaving only the lifeboat to carry all hands away from the sinking ship.

The old Captain himself supervised the putting away of this boat, dumping oil over the side to calm the sea, then at the right moment dropping her into the water, and so intense was the mental and physical strain to all on board the *Cleecup*, that too little attention was given to the calculation of provisions and the boat went over casually stored, except for water and hardtack. The will to live, at sea, sometimes meets obstacles so hard that the bodies of men are mere machinery to their courage in overcoming them. Yet more at sea than elsewhere is the miracle of escape another reason for facing one thing at a time without regard for the next catastrophe.

One by one the crew lowered themselves into the waiting boat; the Captain followed and then ordered them to hurry away from the sinking ship.

"Hold on," yelled Liverpool Harry. "The mate aint on board yet."

"Where is he, where is he?" came a howl from wailing lungs.

Then the mate's voice from the bulwark rail reached down to them:

"Stand by to take hold of the pig, men."

United protest came like a squall from the boat:

"We aint taking 'im."

"There aint no room in this boat for no pig!"

Calmly the mate slipped a timber-hitch about the struggling animal, and regardless of opposition or squeals, lowered away, until the crew in desperation reached over the gunwale of the boat and hauled him in. Then the mate climbed down, and the sailors manned the oars and rowed away. When they were less than two cable-lengths away from the *Cleecup*, they saw her bows pitch up in the air, and stern first she sailed down into the deep.

Two of the crew were told off to keep the pig quiet in the bottom of the boat and the bailers relieved the rowers till the sea became calm again. At noon that day they hoisted a sail, but the wind was light and the boat made little headway. The crew slept around the pig in the bottom of the boat, the mate and Captain relieving each other steering.

When the cool evening came, there was a general awakening and stretching-out of human forms from the bottom of the boat to make irregularities in her outline against the sky. There was also a hungry cry in the voice of the men. It is the growing-worse of that demand for food that is the next terror of the sea.

They ate up the hasty odds and ends they had brought, and the Captain told them to go easy on the hardtack. He said that he had no idea when they would be *(Continued on page 120)*

By George Gibbs

Sackcloth and Scarlet

Illustrated by the Author

The first book ever written by the author of "Mamselle Chérie," "Fires of Ambition" and this present novel bore the pertinent title "Junk." That was a good many years ago when the now famous author-illustrator was a student in the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, dreaming of one day when he might become another Farragut. "Junk" was a volume devoted to Academy life, and was so successful among the boys that its originator then and there renounced salt water for ink. He's been swimming in it ever since.

The Story So Far:

JOAN FREEMAN'S desperate defense of her sister altered her life in a moment. "It isn't Polly's baby," Joan had said to Georgia Curtis, the gossiping inquisitor who had put her on the rack, "but mine—my baby. I hope you understand."

They had been on a summer trip to the Canadian Rockies, two wealthy orphans unchaperoned; and Joan had been unwise enough to make a separate journey for a few days, leaving feather-headed little Polly to her own devices—which had included a reckless clandestine flirtation, under an assumed name, with a handsome guide named Steve, who did not in the least understand the girl. Steve, indeed, had been honest enough; after the affair had gone too far, he had expected to marry "Ruth Shirley," as he knew her, at once. But she had shrunk from the complications of such a step—of introducing the awkward Westerner to her smart set in New York; and she had departed from Lake Louise abruptly, leaving no address.

Sometime afterward, in New York, Polly was driven to confess it all to Joan; and the older sister had at once gone to Lake Louise to find Steve—Polly hadn't even known his last name. But Steve, after he had learned of "Ruth Shirley's" disappearance, had also vanished.

Joan had taken her sister to France then, to an obscure hamlet where Polly's baby, a boy, was born. But her recovery was slow; and when inquisitive Georgia Curtis passed by on a motor trip and recognized Joan as she wheeled the child by the roadside, Joan did not dare risk the shock of reporting the mischance to Polly. And so now, also, when Joan confronted Georgia in Paris, her protective passion for her younger sister drove her to claim the child as her own. . . . . No, life would never be the same again for Joan.

Presently Polly grew better, but her character was not changed. She evinced no affection for her son—consented, indeed, to Joan's sacrifice. And soon, keeping her secret, she married one Joe Drake.

Joan took the boy as her own and remained in France till he was two; then, assuming the name of "Mrs. Freeman," she removed to Washington, and lived in seclusion there for some years—until a chance encounter with young Congressman Stephen Edwards, and an instant mutual attraction, again changed the complexion of her world.

Edwards was leading the fight of the conservation group against a powerful New York syndicate seeking to acquire certain timber reserves; the Curtises were at the head of that syndicate; and Georgia, perhaps desirous of knowing their enemy better, invited Edwards to dinner. There Edwards heard the accepted story about Joan—and there too he refused the overtures of Sam Curtis to aid his iniquitous Verde River Bill.

The power of the Curtis group was soon demonstrated. Through their influence, Edwards' attempt to have it killed in committee was defeated, and it was favorably reported. And a little later Edwards' friend Ransom came to him with the news that a scandalous story was being circulated, linking Edwards' name with that of Joan Freeman.

The gossip was assiduously spread; and presently Joan learned of it through her friend Beatrice de Selignac. To leave Washington seemed to Joan the only means of silencing the story; Edwards had another plan—and came to Joan on the eve of her departure with a proposal of marriage. She refused him. And then—Polly turned up. She had broken with her worthless husband, was out of funds and out of health.

Joan took Polly with her to a hotel in Atlantic City, and bought her a new wardrobe. Shortly thereafter Edwards learned of Joan's address through Beatrice de Selignac and went to Atlantic City to persuade her to change her mind. Joan was out when he called; he was received by Polly—and they recognized in each other the Steve and the Ruth Shirley of that long-ago Lake Louise episode.

After a perfunctory call on Joan, Edwards returned to Washington, his mind in a turmoil. But this did not prevent his making a fine speech against the Verde River Bill when it came up for consideration—a speech that brought about its defeat.

Beatrice de Selignac, meanwhile, had undertaken the task of bringing Joan and Edwards together, though she had learned from Edwards that a woman out of the past prevented the continuance of his courtship of Joan. Beatrice persuaded Joan to move back to Washington. Shortly after their arrival Polly, hidden in the library, overheard Joan confess to Beatrice her feeling for Edwards. Reproved for eavesdropping, Polly threatened to retaliate by taking Jack away from Joan, who had not legally adopted him. *(The story continues in detail:)*

WHEN dinner was announced, Polly sent word that she was tired and would stay in her room, and so Joan and Jack dined alone. It was not until late in the evening, after Jack had been sent to bed and Joan sat alone in the library, that Polly came down.

"Have the trunks arrived?" she asked coolly.

"No. We'll have to wait until morning," Joan replied. In the interval since she had left Polly, Joan had fought a battle and won.

Polly apparently had been sleeping, and her appearance was

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"You know, Joan, what you said was the truth. We haven't been as friendly as we ought to have been."

unkempt, her hair frowsy, her eyes darkly luminous in the pallor of her face. She flung herself with a gasp into the chair upon the other side of the fireplace.

"Heavens, it's lonely here. Is it always like this? I couldn't stay up there another minute. You don't mind if I sit here awhile?"

"No, of course not."

Polly shifted restlessly in her chair, her fingers twitching among her draperies. And then after a moment she spoke.

"I came down because I—I wanted to tell you that I'm sorry we quarreled. I don't want you to think I'm not grateful, Joan. I am grateful. I just lost my temper. I haven't got as good control of myself as I used to have."

"Oh, it's all right," said Joan slowly. "I'm sorry I had to speak to you so sharply."

Polly frowned into the fire, crossed her fingers over a knee, then suddenly got up and stood motionless.

"I—I guess I deserved it." She moved to the back of Joan's chair and stopped again. "You know, Joan, I've been thinking—what you said was the truth. We haven't been as friendly as we ought to have been. I guess it's my fault as much as yours. But you've changed so. You don't seem to think I care about you or about your affairs. You've never told me anything about things—personal things, I mean. I think you ought to have. We've been separated a good many years, but I've never forgotten how we used to tell each other everything." She sighed and slowly paced the floor. "I suppose I *did* lose my right to all that when I went away, but I hoped you might forgive me and meet me halfway in trying to be what we used to be."

Joan had not moved. Her gaze was on the dying fire, but she was keenly aware of every motion that Polly made. The plea was not unexpected; but to Joan, Polly's tones suggested none of the spontaneity of a generous impulse. Her words were jerky, dry and mechanical, like those of a child forced to a recitation.

"Time has made many changes in us both, I'm afraid. I'm less tolerant than I used to be. It's better not to say anything more about it."

Her tones were gentle but reserved. Polly seemed to recognize their limitations and sat again silent. Then:

"I don't suppose you realize how it makes me feel, Joan," she said, "to know that you give Beatrice the confidences denied to me. I think that was what hurt me so."

Polly was apparently unaware that her comment was a confession of eavesdropping. But Joan said nothing of it.

"Beatrice has been my friend for many years," she replied slowly. "She has shown her affection in many ways when I have been alone and friendless."

"Friendless? Yes, I suppose you were. But that was because you wanted to be, wasn't it? You needn't have lived this life all these years unless you had wanted to. There would have been a way out—"

"Not a way that I could take," said Joan soberly.

"Oh, of course there's no use speaking of it now."

"No, there isn't."

Another silence.

"But of course you're not friendless now, with Beatrice and Stephen Edwards.

Joan made no reply.

"He's a very splendid man, isn't he? With such a brilliant future before him. Of course, I know how things are with you. I knew it at Atlantic City. Does he know anything of the real story of the past—of your story and mine?"

"No." Joan straightened and rose. "Why do you ask these questions?"

"Haven't I a right to *some* interest in your future, Joan dear?"

"There's no question as to my future. As you must know, it's quite impossible for me to marry."

"Really—but if he loves you?"

"Please, Polly—"

"Oh, all right." Polly made a shrug and rose. "It's almost bedtime, isn't it? I just wanted you to forget anything I said about Jack. You will, wont you? There's a dear."

IN her room upstairs, Polly walked the floor smoking many cigarettes. Life had become, to her, a game where buffets were to be exchanged for buffets given. She was still within her rights in exacting, as she could, every recompense for the damages that she had suffered.

Many things had conspired to harden her heart against Joan—envy of her physical comforts, of her "looks," which put her own faded fairness quite into the shade, of the simple elegance of Joan's clothes, of the well-ordered house, the warm welcome of her servants, and of the friendship of Beatrice de Selignac. But more than these was the rankling sense of her own shortcomings in her relations with this sister.

The appearance of the man from Paradise Valley had brought a new element into her calculations. Her visit to the library had been fruitful and worth all of Joan's reproaches. She knew all that she needed to know. And Joan had asserted that it was impossible that she should marry Stephen Edwards. Had she been sincere?

Polly lay upon the bed in her room, rocking to and fro in silent merriment. It was too good a joke on Joan. "I forbid you to speak of him." Polly laughed aloud as she declaimed dramatically, "Oh, Lord! What a joke!"

Polly was growing hysterical. That wouldn't do. She would have to go to sleep. She thrust her hand under the pillow and examined the contents of the vial. Sleep! Two would not be too many tonight. She would want to think clearly tomorrow. She would have to decide what she must do about everything—about Steve, about Jack and Joan, about herself.

She fell back upon the bed staring at the light upon the bedstand. It was late. How heavenly, to feel drowsy again after the racing of her brain! She reached toward the light, but her arm slipped along the pillow, and she let it lie there. Volition had deserted her.



"A child!" he muttered, staring at her, still incredulous. "A child! Mine?"

EDWARDS had an apartment of five pleasant rooms, a parlor, an office adjoining, a hall, and three bedrooms, one of which was occupied by his secretary, Mr. Hastings. At his apartment he did most of his reading and studying, and carried on his correspondence with constituents, so that when he went to Capitol Hill, his mind was cleared for legislative business.

His secretary, Hastings, was an able young fellow devoted to the causes of his employer. He had followed Edwards' career eagerly, and entering with a whole heart into the campaign against the Verde River Bill, had rejoiced in the happy issue of the struggle.

But his cheerful, nearsighted eyes blinked curiously as he noted the sober brows and weary appearance of his chief. These had at first seemed merely the physical reactions from the many weeks of hard work in the fight to defeat the Curtis crowd. That battle had been fought and won, and the praise of Ransom had been sweet to them both, the quiet congratulations of the President enough to restore a man merely fagged with labor. Ed-



wards had dined at the White House, and Ransom had predicted great things for the coming year; but Edwards had returned to his apartment without elation and had spoken little to his secretary of the interview. Something was wrong. The suspicion had grown that this trouble was in some way connected with Mrs. Freeman, for since her return from Atlantic City the Congressman no longer visited her house. But Mr. Hastings had the wisdom of an owl, a bird which he slightly resembled—and like the owl, he had merely blinked sagely, and attended to his own business.

So prudent was he that when he had met Madam de Selignac at an afternoon tea, he had avoided answering the questions that she asked him about Edwards. Indeed, he gave her so little satisfaction that the next morning she did them the honor of calling at their apartment before eleven.

It had been apparent that Edwards was slightly disturbed by this invasion of his privacy. But after a moment of frowning hesitation, he had hurried into his coat. And when she came in, he had sent Hastings away to the Committee on Public Lands with some correspondence for Mr. Ransom.

Hastings would, of course, have given a great deal to know what had happened in that interview. He was sure that it had provided no panacea for his employer's troubles, for when Edwards appeared at the Committee room after lunch, his frown and air of abstraction were deeper than ever. Hastings was not a sentimental young man, and had already reached the conclusion that if love was the sort of disease that destroyed a man's appetite, there was not going to be any of it for him. Edwards had managed without women for a great many years. It was a pity that now, when he stood on the very threshold of great accomplishment, he should have permitted them to disturb the deeper currents of his thoughts.

Hastings was still more mystified when several days after the visit of Madam de Selignac, he received an invitation to come to her house the following afternoon for tea.

She wrote that the matter was important, and asked, moreover, that Mr. Hastings say nothing to Mr. Edwards of her note or of his visit. He complied with her request, only to have his curiosity still further aroused, for the favor that she demanded was merely that if a Mrs. Drake called Mr. Edwards' apartment by telephone, Mr. Hastings would immediately let her know. Mr. Hastings could see that she was very reticent as to the meaning of the request, merely explaining that she was acting as a friend of Mr. Edwards in a delicate matter which could not be discussed.

Mr. Hastings left her house rather bewildered by her friendliness and charm, aware that almost in spite of himself he had given her the promise that she had exacted.

Who was Mrs. Drake? And what possible object could Madam de Selignac have in wishing to know if this Mrs. Drake called up the apartment? It was all very mysterious, arousing much curiosity. But there seemed to be no question as to the genuineness of Madam de Selignac's regard for Mr. Edwards, or of his for her, so that in agreeing to do what she asked, he felt sure that he was in no way betraying his employer.

These things and many others more pertinent to his business of secretary to a growing statesman, Mr. Hastings considered some days later as he sat in the office of the apartment at his typewriter, transcribing the stenographic notes of the letters that

Edwards had dictated. The telephone bell rang. A woman's voice answered him:

"Is that you, Steve?"

"Wrong number," he snapped, about to hang up the receiver, when she spoke again.

"Isn't this Mr. Edwards' apartment?" the voice asked quickly.

"Oh, I beg pardon. Yes. It is. I am his secretary."

"Oh! This is Mrs. Drake. Is Mr. Edwards in?"

"No. He went to the Land Office on business. But he is due at the Capitol at twelve."

"Do you expect him at his apartment again before he goes to the Capitol?"

Hastings hesitated. The use of Edwards' Christian name seemed to give this woman some claims upon him.

"Yes," he replied. "He ought to be back very soon to sign his mail."

"Oh, thanks. It's very important for me to see him at once. I'll come right down."

The devil she would! Hastings hung up the receiver and blinked at it resentfully.

"Steve" indeed! Madam de Selignac, it seemed, had some sources of information as to Mr. Edwards' private affairs denied to his secretary. But Hastings recalled his promise and rang her up at once, telling her that Mrs. Drake had called on the telephone and that she was, in fact, at that moment on her way to the apartment. He thought that the voice at the other end of the wire showed signs of agitation. But after thanking him for the information, she rang off almost at once.

The return of Mr. Edwards a few moments later put an end to his speculations.

"Here are the letters," he said briskly. And then carelessly: "A Mrs. Drake called up, saying that it was very important for her to see you at once. She's on the way here now."

If Hastings had not been watching so keenly, he might have missed the slight jerk of Edwards' head and the sudden quick contraction of his eyes.

"Mrs. Drake!" he muttered, frowning. "Did you tell her I had to go to the Capitol."

"Yes, I did. But she said that her business was important—that she was coming down at once."

"Oh."

Edwards walked to the window, where he stood motionless for a long moment, gazing down into the square. Hastings went on with his work, taking quick glances at the Congressman's back.

"All right," said Edwards at last. "I'll see her. You can go on with your work here, but see that the doors are closed. It's a—a private matter, Hastings."

AT the sound of the bell, Edwards put down his pen. Hastings went out into the hallway.

"In the parlor, Hastings, if it's Mrs. Drake. I'll join her in a moment. And I want you to see that we're not disturbed."

The announcement of this visit had astonished him, for it had seemed that any possible excuses for further discussion with Joan's sister had been exhausted in their interview in the grill at the Traymore. He did not want to see her. Of no one else is a man so intolerant as of the woman he no longer cares for. She had made an unpleasant impression upon him. More than this, she was the living presentment of a folly, a barrier to his happiness—a something more than a barrier, even, a threat to his peace of mind.

As he opened the door between office and parlor, she turned from the window where she had been standing.



"I—I suppose you're very much surprised to see me," she said quickly.

He closed the door behind him and stood for a moment looking at her, his hand still on the knob.

"Yes, I'll admit that I am," he said, slowly going forward. "Wont you sit down?"

As she complied, he noticed that the garish sunlight of morning was less merciful to her than the shaded lights of the dusky room in which he had last seen her. She seemed ill at ease, too, or nervous, her speech coming in little short gusts of exhausting intensity.

"I—I had to talk to you again. I thought I'd said everything that was necessary. But I haven't. I couldn't take the chances of seeing you at the Capitol in a public place. I had to see you when we wouldn't be interrupted. That's why I came to your apartment. No one can hear?" she asked after a pause.

He smiled a little.

"No. My secretary is busy at the typewriter. You wont be interrupted. But I'll admit I'm a little curious as to the nature of this unexpected visit."

"Yes, I can understand that," she broke in quickly. "The whole thing is rather unusual." She gave a dry laugh. "Why



They both turned..... The door flew open, and Madam de Selignac entered quickly. Behind her stood Bob Hastings and Joan.

wouldn't it be? There was never anything quite so extraordinary in the world as this—our—situation, yours and mine."

She paused, her hands clasping. He tried to believe that she was acting, and partly succeeded, for his memories of her all had to do with insincerity.

"I'm waiting for you to explain," he said.

"I'll try to. I tried the other day to tell you something of what I'd suffered—my illness, I mean, how I nearly died. But you didn't understand. I didn't seem to be able to tell you then what I meant—the truth—about the illness."

She gave him a fleeting glance and then rose nervously, turning away from him as his eyes fixed on her curiously, judicially, like a doctor already warned of symptoms of neurosis in a patient.

"I was ill because—because there was a child." She turned toward him quickly, her gaze flickering into his for a moment. "My child, Steve," she gasped, as she bent her head again, "and yours!"

A slight contraction of the fingers on the table edge, a quick intake of his breath. His chair moved slightly.

"A child!" he muttered, staring at her, still incredulous. "A child! Mine?"

"And mine," she added.

There was a silence. He got up and walked to the window. When he turned, his face had grown grayer.

"It died?" he asked quietly.

"No. That's just the trouble," she said more coolly. "It didn't."

He moved so that he could look into her face. His eyes narrowed; his voice deepened.

"Go on," he muttered after a moment. "But tell me the truth," he added, almost savagely.

"I will. It's rotten enough without trying to make it worse. I told you I'd suffered. I did suffer, agonies, from the beginning. We were in New York. I was desperate. I thought of killing myself. Things couldn't go on. I had to do something, tell somebody. So I confessed—told Joan everything."

Polly paused, straightened, her glance flitting from place to place, finally bending upon the fingers that were twisting her handkerchief into a string.

"Joan took charge. She wouldn't let me do—what I'd wanted to do; and so, the baby was born."

NOT yet did he guess the whole truth. He had a mind which concentrated always upon the question at issue. He was too much a part of the drama to connect it with another. But she had conquered his intolerance. His head was bent, his hands clasped in back of him.

"And then?" he asked.

"I nearly died. That doesn't matter, of course, now, since I grew well again."

"And the baby?" he asked with growing intensity. "You say it did not die. Where is it?"

She turned and stood for a moment leaning heavily upon the chair-back away from him. She did not reply at once. She was, it seemed, poised between opposing resolutions. She chose for the moment a middle course.

"You see," she said, making him a wistful smile, "I'm within my rights in telling you this. I've taken the burdens—yours as well as mine. And our duties should be mutual."

Edwards stood frowning, watching *(Continued on page 104)*

Illustrated by
Forrest C. Crooks

As you read this chapter in the biography of the Shrimp, the pup is on the shore of Chin's Lake, high in the Colorado Rockies, watching his master and biographer snake the wary trout from the riffling waters. Afterward he will drag folks over to inspect the catch quite as if he'd done it himself.



"Don't you know that's part of my trousseau?" she asked vehemently. "I ought to take your head off!"

The First Assistant Burglar

By
Courtney Ryley Cooper

"THERE!" said Miss Margaret Lannington, of Kenwood, Missouri, as she stood triumphantly by the living-room window. "I guess that will make her sit up and take notice!"

As she said it, her gaze remained directed toward the tree-lined sidewalk, down which a young woman in straight-cut garb and bearing a general air of mannishness was fading out of sight in the direction of the interurban station. She had been there most of the afternoon, during which time she had explained that it was not a profitable thing for her at all—the cost of making the cut of a photograph in itself, she had said, would eat a big hole in the fifty dollars. A matter of which Margaret Lannington knew little and cared less! The main thing was the fact that official notice had been taken of her—even to the extent of an editor coming all the way from St. Louis for an interview. So she spoke again, to the street, to the empty room and to a certain well-defined sound of snoring from a far corner:

"Well! I guess his uppish old relative will have something to think about when she sees that in print! As if it were any of her business whom he married! I guess I'm as good as she ever thought of— Toodles!"

For she had turned, and now was swooping forward, arms outstretched, to where a brown-and-white Boston bulldog, eyes bulging, legs scrambling, was attempting to make his escape from a nest of crêpe de chine ere an avenging angel should overtake him. Impossible! A moment later, his four white paws stretched stiffly in as many directions, his catfish mouth pulled dejectedly

at the corners and his sharp ears tight against his head, he submitted to a pretense of a spanking, while Margaret Lannington added words to the disgrace:

"Don't you know that's part of my trousseau?" she asked vehemently. "I just ought to take your head off!"

But she didn't. In fact, she did little more than roughen the coat of the scrambling Boston. Lord Kilkenning Marston Conqueror I, otherwise Toodles, otherwise His Majesty the Shrimp, champion Boston bulldog of Missouri, had played too big a part in the happiness of Margaret Lannington for her to be otherwise than considerate. It had been His Majesty who had first caused young Mr. Theodore Bainbridge of the Tri-State Manufacturing Company to propose. It had been the Shrimp who had shown Mr. Bainbridge how to make a commercial success out of Eight-horse Glue—a Percheron Pull and a Bulldog Grip. It had even been His Majesty who had helped conclusively in electing young Mr. Bainbridge mayor of Kenwood; and now that their wedding was approaching, Miss Margaret simply couldn't be harsh. So after a while she petted the dog and returned to her work, a pink glow of satisfaction in her cheeks as she thought again of the events of the afternoon, while for a time the Shrimp stood on his bowed legs looking out the window, then with a whine went to the kitchen, where he sat staring at a grain-sack which hung from a peg on the cellar door. These might be wonderful times for Mayor Bainbridge and for Miss Margaret, but for the Shrimp they were gall and wormwood.

Nobody played with him any more. Nobody had time. In a little more than two weeks an important event would happen, and now there was no time for His Majesty. No longer did he sit upon his silken pillow in bored acquiescence while his nails were manicured. Margaret Lannington had too many other things to think about. Even the great problem of His Majesty's bath had passed into other hands; it was big-footed Norah, the temporary hired girl, who seized the Shrimp by his midriff and soused him with impersonal haste into the stationary tub, where she scrubbed him with laundry soap—the Shrimp, who had known the day when his plunge had been an affair of moment, the water tempered just so, and perfumed with bath-salts. As for an indulgence like play, it was out of the question. These days most of the Shrimp's time was spent under the kitchen cabinet, watching Norah's feet.

Even Mr. Bainbridge—Mayor Bainbridge, as they referred to him now—seemed to have passed him by. Time was, when with the Shrimp hanging on one end of the grain-sack at which he now stared so dolorously, Mayor Bainbridge tugging at the other, the back yard of the Lannington house had resounded to shouts and growls and delighted barkings, while Margaret smiled approval from the kitchen door. That was when young Mr. Bainbridge had been obsessed with a great idea—of pasting two pieces of cloth together with Eight-horse Glue and then giving a public exhibition by swinging the Shrimp about at one end to show the strength of the Tri-State's new product. But it had been days, now, since the Shrimp had practiced. It had been days, in fact, since anybody had taken the trouble to toss him his unchewable rubber bone, or his gutta-percha ball. These reposed in the grain-sack, and nobody took them out. When he whined, Norah merely pushed a foot at him, and the only time Margaret came to the kitchen was when she announced that three of the bridesmaids intended to stop in for luncheon. Even in the evenings when Mr. Bainbridge dropped by, he merely shoved the Shrimp aside in a preoccupied manner, and sat staring at the line in the etiquette-book where it was demanded that the boutonnière of the groom and the best man should be very much alike, but different. Marriage had its problems. But the Shrimp didn't know it.

He only realized that his grain-sack and his rubber bone and his ball hung there on a peg, and that nobody loved him enough any more to give them to him; that day after day his mistress rushed forth to frenzied sallies in her motorcar and forgot to take him along; that Norah seemed a constant combination of a big foot and an objurgation to git outen the way. So it had been and so it continued. Then one morning, when the eleven-forty-five whistled in, Margaret Lannington looked excitedly at the calendar, reached for her hat, forgot it as suddenly as she



"Now just forget I'm here," she said. "Aunt America can take care of herself, even if she is sixty-four."

had thought of it, and rushed for the post office, where she received a tubular roll containing a dozen copies of St. Louis' most recent acquisition, *The Social Ladder*.

Safe in a corner of the post office, she turned the pages, and with a little gasp of unsurprised surprise, gazed upon a photograph of familiar features—her own. She read the text, while her eyes glowed and her cheeks heightened with color. Then hastily she went to the stamp-window and bought an envelope which she split carefully, wrapped about a marked copy, addressed, and mailed immediately. After that she went home and read the effusion again. Then she waited until Theodore should put in an appearance.

"There's a little notice in *The Social Ladder,*" she said quite innocently when that event happened. Theodore picked up the paper, one of those things which spring up in every big city, flourish as long as there are those who are willing to pay for publicity, then quietly fade away. But Theodore, being in the glue business, knew little of this.

"Humph!" he said. "That's a good picture, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is," said Margaret, shying the Shrimp out of the way with a foot as she looked over Theodore's shoulder. "I—didn't know about giving it to her, but of course she insisted."

"Sure she would," said Theodore. "Why not?" Then his eyes settled to the text, at last, and after reading a bit he exclaimed: "Humph! I didn't know that about all your ancestors, Margaret!"

"Oh!" Margaret touched her hair with an airy finger. "Didn't you?"

"No. Gee," he beamed proudly, "you've sure got a family tree, haven't you?"

"Well, it does date back a little."

"I should say it does." Then, reading from the flowery text: "'Miss Lannington is from one of our oldest and proudest families, her lineage dating from the very cradle of Americanism itself. It is even found that she is descended directly from America's early grantees, among whom are numbered the Calverts, first Lords Baltimore, founders of what later became the State of Maryland, from whom her lineage is traced through the famous Thomas strain of Virginia, whose claims to the entire ownership of that great State occupied for some time the attention of the courts.'

"Gee whiz!" commented Theodore.

Margaret again smoothed her hair.

"It is interesting, isn't it?" she asked. Nor did she add that it was all the more interesting because she had known nothing of the facts herself until she had read them in *The Social Ladder*. The mannish young woman had merely hinted at several things which she intended to look up. Evidently the looking had been very good. Theodore breathed deeply.



The thin man turned to the Shrimp. "Nix on that stuff, dog!"

"Gee whiz!" he said again. Then suddenly: "You don't happen to have an extra copy, do you, Margaret?"

"Why?"

"Well,"—he was approaching a rather delicate subject,—"I—I—just thought it might be nice to send one of these to Aunt America."

Margaret smiled.

"I knew you'd think of her, Theodore. So I just attended to it."

That seemed to please young Mr. Bainbridge. As for Margaret, she dropped the subject as quickly as possible. Miss Lannington was not the kind, as she often told herself, to harp on anything. Sufficient that a snoopy old relative who thought it her business to ask a nephew a thousand questions about the girl he was to marry, should be apprised in cold type what that girl *really* amounted to. After that, it could be a closed incident as far as Margaret was concerned. There was nothing catty about *her!* So she mentioned that Uncle Herbert had consented to be present at the wedding and give her away, and bewailed the fact that Millie Brandon wanted to wear an orchid dress when Margaret knew she'd look better in peach-blow, and a number of other details of a very important event. Then after Theodore had gone, she carefully hid *The Social Ladder* where her mother wouldn't see it; and triumphant and satisfied, relented sufficiently from her usual state of preoccupation to heed the Shrimp when he begged to be taken for a ride in the twilight.

Margaret drove with a queer glint in her eyes, and gripped hard at the wheel, meanwhile talking at intervals to herself.

"I guess that'll fix her!" she said more than once. "As if it should make any difference to her whom he married!"

Of course, she admitted, if Theodore's Aunt America hadn't been so outspoken about it, there would have been some excuse for her inquiries. But she could have done it in a nice way—not simply write to Theodore and ask him point blank what kind of a girl he was marrying, and whether or not she came from a good family, and was she of the sort to make him the wife he should have? And questions as to how long he had known her, and was she one of these present-day flappers who did everything but chew tobacco, or did she come from the fine old American stock from which he himself had sprung? There'd been no need for her to go snooping about to that extent, even if she was Theodore's only living relative nearer than a fourth cousin. Not at all!

"Besides," she reasoned with some heat as the Shrimp danced about on the back seat at the sight of a passing machine, "I don't see why she should get so excited all of a sudden—since she hasn't even set eyes on him for eighteen years! They don't even know what each other looks like. But I never knew it to fail—I'm glad I wasn't born to be an old maid, and make everybody else's life miserable!"

After that she wondered for a mile or two what caused old maids to get that way, and settled the matter by the resigned knowledge that somehow or other, they always were. Theodore's Aunt America suddenly had become Margaret Lannington's most important aversion. There was good reason, of course—since Theodore had no one else. Now, if it had been his mother, she considered, there would have been an excuse, just as Margaret Lannington's mother naturally had made inquiries when Theodore began to call. But for an aunt, and a maiden aunt at that! It was different. It was almost insulting.

Whereupon Margaret turned the machine back toward town, much to the disgust of the Shrimp, and strove to visualize the person who was causing all her trouble.

She must be old—and childish. Yes, that was it—



Through ushers and best man, bridegroom and bridesmaids, he burst. "The house! Robbed. All them weddin' presents!"

childish. Probably one of these hawk-nosed old pelicans who sit around all day in a black-lace cap, looking out between the curtains and keeping tab on the neighbors. Margaret hadn't lived all her life in Missouri and spent some time in the inland towns not to know the type. Broad-flounced black silk skirt, drawn tight at the waist, congress-gaitered shoes of purple-black kid with broad toes, always resting on a hassock of red cabbaged Brussels carpet. Gnarled white hands, with blue veins running along the backs, and big knuckles, grasping a cane that never was used. White collar and cuff set. A large cameo resting awry upon a high bosom. A deep, squeaky voice, if it could be described by such a paradox. And the low-down on every neighbor within fifty-two miles, who married whom and how many children, and whether Martha Westcott was a Van Tookington before she ran away with her third cousin, or whether she belonged to the Talbot branch of the Bostwick family. Yes, Margaret knew the type, and she felt she knew Aunt America. But anyway, what of it? That old cat would find out in about two days, if the rural route out of Labadie carried the second-class mail so frequently, that her precious nephew wasn't throwing away his life on some poor white trash. So, this settled. Margaret breezed into town, her own self once more, called quite cheerily to the Shrimp, and went upstairs to her sewing.

Her placidity continued nearly three days. For no word came from Theodore's Aunt America. Evidently she had been properly and thoroughly squelched. More and more, Margaret began to

feel that her victory was complete. A day or so before the wedding, something horrible would arrive from Labadie—a covered butter-dish and spoon-holder, or a hand-embroidered motto in a red plush frame—following which would come silence. Then Margaret would wait until the judicious moment and make some little remark to Theodore about the fact that Aunt America's curiosity seemed stronger than her generosity, and let it go at that. That disposed of, she gave herself over to the problems of bridesmaids, flower-girls, the reception following the wedding, and remarks to Norah about keeping the Shrimp in the kitchen, when she, Norah, knew that the house was simply filled with delicate things that His Majesty would be sure to get into. Which pleased neither Norah nor His Lordship Kilkenning Marston Conqueror I. Norah liked dogs no more than the Shrimp liked temporary servant-girls with big feet.

In fact, it seemed to His Lordship that things had gone rather topsy-turvy. Somebody was always running into the house, to indulge in "oh's" and "ah's," while they partook of a dish of tea, and he wasn't allowed to see them. The grain-sack, with its precious bone and ball, continued to hang upon the peg on the cellar door, while he longed in vain. Religiously every morning at ten o'clock, Norah soused him in the tub, then set him behind the stove to dry. This, while the doorbell rang incessantly, a thing he always had answered, or the telephone jangled, or steps sounded up and down the stairways, or strange voices drifted to him, or delivery boys came and went—all conducive to unrequited curiosity. Even when Norah let him into the back yard, there were always things on the line, and she yanked him in again almost as soon as she had pushed him out. His was a dog's life.

BUT there came a morning when the Shrimp took the run of the house without even a question. Theodore had faced Norah when she had answered the bell, a very gray Theodore, with blue lines about his lips, and a certain cast of slate-color to his ears which gave them a deadish appearance. He asked for Miss Margaret, and then when she came downstairs, he asked concerning the presence of her mother. Upon receiving the knowledge that she was at the dressmaker's, he suggested in a hollow voice that it might be well to send Norah downtown for something. Following which, while Margaret gaped, and the Shrimp in new freedom danced from one window to another, Mayor Theodore Bainbridge of the City of Kenwood, fished into his pocket with a trembling hand and brought forth a letter.

"Read it!" he exclaimed tragically. Margaret obeyed with a glance.

"Well, what of it?" she asked. "Let her come, if she wants to."

Theodore swallowed gulpily.

"That's just it," he said. "There's—there's no way to stop her."

Margaret again surveyed him, this time with particular attention to his slaty ears and the fact that his nose was perspiring—always a sign that Theodore was tremendously perturbed.

"Well, I can't see, Theo," she answered, "why you should let any relative ruin your life! If Aunt America wants to come to the wedding," she added with a wave of the hands, "why, let her come! We sent her an invitation, didn't we? Not that there was any particular desire on our part for her to attend, but it was an invitation, just the same. We can't shut the doors on her."

"But—but you don't understand." A large bead of perspiration rolled to the end of Theodore's nose, then wabbled off into space. "I—I don't want her."

"Well, that's nothing. Neither do I. But how are we going to help ourselves?"

"We've got to help it—or—or something." Theodore stared blankly at the bow-legged Shrimp, as if for inspiration. But there was none. His Majesty was merely jamming his nose against the window at the sight of Charley Hancock's black cat, next door. At last he blurted forth: "If—if she finds I've fibbed to her—"

"Fibbed?" Margaret gasped. "About what?"

A LONG period of silence followed this, until Theodore could put into some semblance of shape the tangled condition of his brain.

"Well," came desperately, "when she first wrote to me, I figured I knew what was on her mind. I'm not a Bainbridge for nothing—I know the strain in the whole family." He straightened aggressively. "My father used to ding it into me—that it was a proud name, and that I'd have to go a long way to live up to it. So when that first letter came, I just sat down and wrote sort of offhand, about our house and things—mentioned, of course, that it was a fourteen-room place and said it had spacious grounds, and so forth."

"Well, hasn't it?" asked Margaret.

"Yes," answered Theodore glumly, "but I didn't mention that we'd gotten it at a bargain in the first place, and paid for part of it out of what the Shrimp won at the dog-show, and that the rest was on time. I just sort of casually said that it'd be cheap at fifty thousand."

"Why, Theodore!"

"Well, it would," he answered pugnaciously, "if somebody wanted to pay that for it. I thought, since she was nosing in, I might as well give her what she wanted. So I hinted that I was a member of the Tri-State firm and really didn't have to worry about anything. Of course, I didn't say that the 'anything' was money, but she could take it that way if she wanted to."

"Theo!"

But it brought no quailing.

"You did the same thing!" he said.

"I?"

"Yes, you. I don't see what you're jumping on me for. That woman was up to see me this morning—from *The Social Ladder*."

"Oh!"

"Not that I care. But—but—anyway, after—after that item came out in the *Ladder*, I just thought I'd help things along a bit. I—I wrote Aunt America another letter."

"And then what?"

"Well, I said I was giving you a diamond pendant."

"You are."

"Yes," came dolefully. "Only, the one I'm giving you cost about a hundred and fifty dollars. The one I described to Aunt America had seventy-five perfect stones set in platinum, surrounding a blue-white tear-drop diamond of about four carats. The only difference," he added, "is about eight thousand dollars."

"And—and I suppose you said the wrist-watch you're giving me is solid platinum."

"Uh-huh," admitted the gray man, "and that relatives of yours in the East were sending a complete chest of solid silverware and a lot of other stuff like that. I thought I might as well show her a good time. And now,"—he gazed toward the letter in his trembling hand,—"she's coming to the wedding."

MARGARET straightened.

"And I suppose she'll give us a piece of her mind when she—she finds out!"

"I—I suppose so."

"Well, she wont!" Then Margaret flounced out of the room, followed by the Shrimp dancing in the expectancy of a walk, flounced back again, with the Shrimp in advance, departed, returned and departed again. At last His Majesty gave it all up as a thing of too many disappointments. But Margaret continued to walk. Theodore spread his hands in a hopeless appeal.

"I—I had to do something," he pleaded. "Aunt America's just that kind. She's got everything there was in the family, and she cut off her own brother because she thought he wouldn't amount to anything. I thought that if I was ever going to have a chance, I had to—"

"We wont talk about that, Theodore," said Margaret. Then under her breath as she stalked into the other room: "She wont read any riot act to *me!*" Then silence again and excited pacing, at last to end in: "Theodore!"

"Y-e-s?"

"Do you know what your precious Aunt America's going to find when she gets here?"

"Why—I guess—"

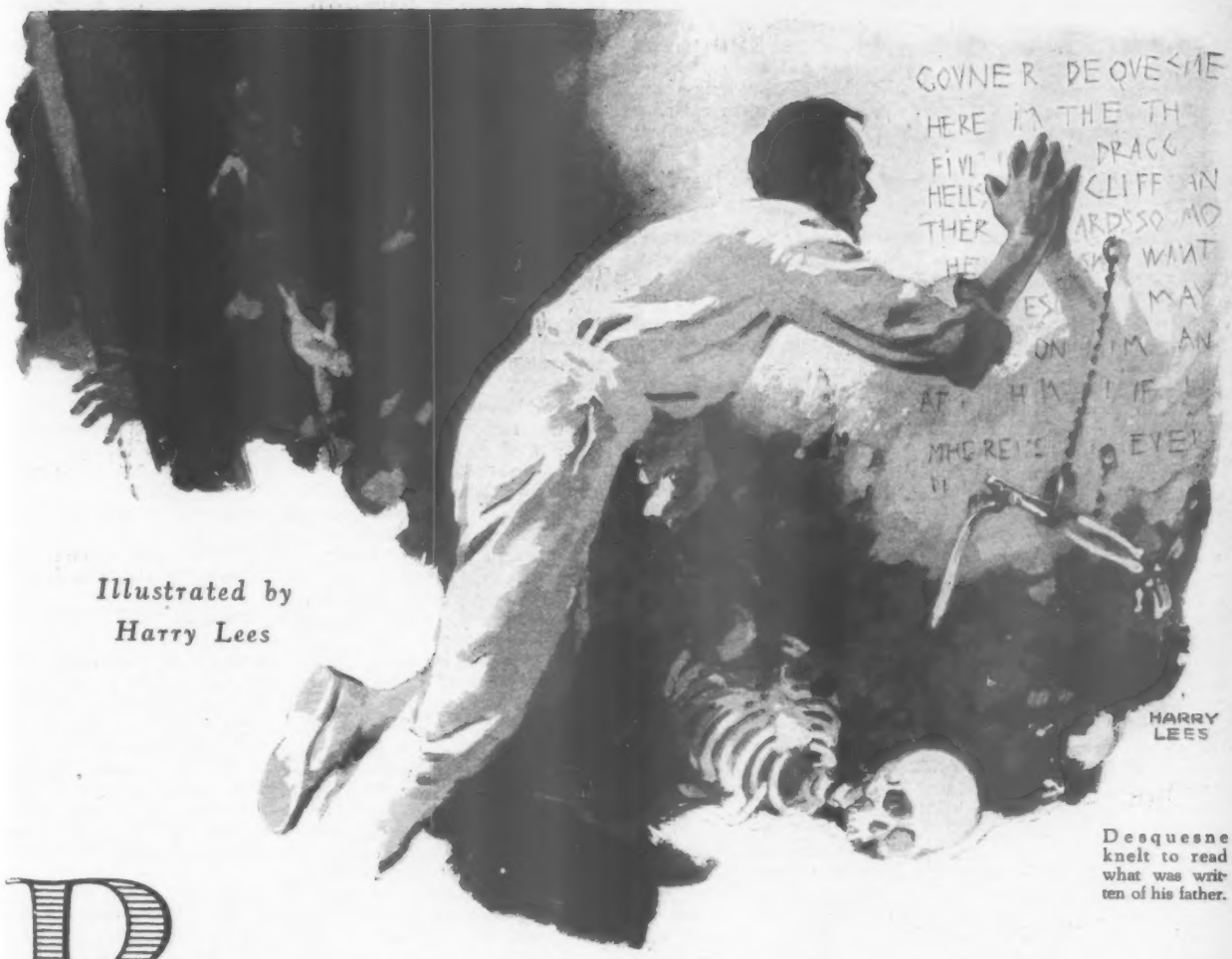
"Well, you just guess wrong. Because, she's going to get everything she's looking for."

"Margaret!"

"Just what I said," she answered, pushing the Shrimp out of the way to give her a better pathway for her pacing. "She hasn't any right to come here, anyway."

"But you just said—"

"Oh, as a guest to the wedding, of course. But not as a committee of investigation. Just the same, Theodore, we'll send her away pleased. Snooping around to see if we're after her money! Drat her money! She'll see so much wealth that she'll—she'll—" Then Margaret, not knowing just what Aunt America might be inclined to do, halted in exasperation. "Theodore," she exclaimed, "we've simply got to go through with it! Either that or have her cackling all over Missouri about how she found us out and humiliated us—humiliated us!" she repeated. *(Continued on page 126)*



Desquesne knelt to read what was written of his father.

Illustrated by Harry Lees

Revenant

By G. B. Lancaster

The name of the author of this vivid and poignant story is one of the most closely guarded pseudonyms of all those employed by living writers. Its owner was born in England but has spent years in the South Seas and is as familiar with Australia and New Zealand as the average person is with his native town. Incidentally—and this may surprise you—G. B. Lancaster is a woman.

KANAKA sailors hosed the deck, puddling their calloused feet in the warm sea-water, grinning, shouting. One of them hosed the captain, who stood near the binnacle, gigantic, pearly in the fog like a statue seen at dawn in a city square. A myriad gulls slanting off the unseen headlands shrieked like angry women, mewed like cats. From the galley the sleepy Chinese cook shot a bucket of refuse overboard, and the swoop of the gulls upon it had the speed of an express-train.

Desquesne puddled bare feet too. The light trade-wind flapped his loose drawers and singlet. He gulped it, savoring that rich, moist, heavy flavor of the tropics. His hair, grizzled slightly at the temples, blew in a black lock over his eager eyes. He cried:

"We're anchored. Are we there? Is this Otiari?"

The captain, doing wonders with towels, sang out: "Aye." Marken poked his head through a deck window and said: "Congrat's, Charley." Desquesne felt idiotic for the moment—as though he wanted to cry. He said, growling: "Doesn't this durn fog ever mean to lift? There wont be too much time." His knees knocked strangely as he walked aft to peer through the opalescence which came right up to his eyeballs.

History begins for a man with what his forefathers did. We have many souls in one body. It was Desquesne's father, governor of Otiari in the old convict days, who walked the deck now in his son's body. For all his modernity, Desquesne was shaken, caught by a great moment, mastered by that unknown something that seemed to be reaching for him out of the fog.

Marken appeared presently in a bath-robe. Desquesne knew that Marken thought him medieval and exaggerated, but he didn't care for that. The end had come now, of that dedication of years ago. And then—the new gods: home and Mary and love and marriage and all the other blisses that he'd missed so far. Were those things real? Or were they no more than nebulous reluctant scent and color like this that permeated the haze about him? Said Marken, sniffing:

"Except for the smells, we might as well be berthed in London Docks."

DESQUESNE didn't mean to be jollied out of his emotions. When a man has given up a good many necessaries, he is likely to feel entitled to retain some few luxuries. He observed pensively:

"I often feel—tragic, y'know. Why should I be the only one left to write a memorial of my father? Claude and Isabel were much cleverer."

"But they couldn't tell the truth, and you can. And truth's what your father would have wanted. Decent of you to have taken so much trouble over it, Charley. He did have rough luck, though. I imagine one doesn't expect to outlive a round dozen of children and then die without a grandchick to inherit from you. But you'll put that right, old man."

"If men inherit souls, I like to fancy that mine has the color of my father's. I saw him just after Harry swindled him out of that land. That's what made me pull up. I think I helped him to die happy."

Marken grunted sympathetically. Old Desquesne, with eyebrows jutting like antennæ, had been the horrid fascination of his own youth. A stout fellow, though. One needed spine to rule a convict station in those days, and his old age had certainly been embittered by his children. Not a straight one among them except Charley, who was now saying:

"The spirit will have gone out of it, but at least I'll have seen the place. Then I'll polish off the thing on the way home and have it all finished and ready for the printers by the time we dock."

"'Seen the place—'" began Marken derisively. Then: "Oh, by Jove!"

The fog-curtain was suddenly rent as though with a hatchet. The sky was of a blue brilliancy that stung the eyeballs. Shining rocks came up out of the sea like seals. Three little islands astern glittered like fire-opals set in gold, then melted into the flood that ran shoreward on the tide with the very distilled quintessence of rainbows gleaming and breaking among the wave-loops.

"There you are," said Marken. Desquesne said nothing. He saw a few little dark figures stringing down the steep white coral road to the jetty. He saw a luxuriance of foliage, low white houses climbing the steep cliffs through a magic of tree-fern and flowering myrtle and hibiscus. His eye even carried back to rolling gullies brimmed with bright light, and a few sleek red cattle moving over greens like jade. He saw somewhere the silver tumbling streak of a waterfall.

He tried to see the place as his father must have seen it in his prime. Paradise become Purgatory. His father must have hated it, cursed the devil's work he had to perform in God's name. And what reward had he received from that long exile? A pension that meagerly kept soul and body together, great sorrows, and afterward, great loneliness. The exquisite injustice of life!

Canoes heaped with glowing fruits and gesticulating brown bare bodies were already thick about the steamer. A rowboat took Desquesne and Marken ashore, and on the dazzling coral beach Desquesne asked questions of a half-caste with the features of a Yarmouth sailor, whose English was chiefly an innocence of oaths bequeathed by his father. The remains of the convict settlement were over the hill, said the man, in a bay on the northern coast. None went there now. Ghosts—bad spirits! He looked askance with round, native eyes, and swung his broad beam away down the steep road.

SAID Desquesne, consideringly:

"That's what they all did, I suppose—the prison guards and ticket-of-leavers and the rest: took native wives. Well, here it is. The whole island going back to nature; all that unhappy far-off time being mercifully wiped out. Let's go on."

Beauty met them on the hill, distances of untrod greens and gold encircled by blue sleeping seas. Sights and savors strange and intriguing, of wild vanilla and citron and thyme. Winds singing through the thin-leaved trees, humming-birds in the fern and dripping blossoms. Palms, heat, silence.

They proceeded down through a leafy tunnel threaded with the trills of strange birds, the warm babble of a little brook. Delicate loveliness, cloying sweetness, caressed them. They came out where the rotting buildings scattered in gray heaps and crags on the edge of the bay, half-smothered now in a wilderness of growing things. They trod on a broken courtyard of stones made slippery by weeds left recently by the tide. The sea was slowly absorbing this place of men's many agonies. The sea, the only permanence.

Desquesne's hands and feet felt cold in spite of the heat as he stepped over fallen doors with their iron bars rotting off, and peered into cells with their iron gratings crazily askew. Owls and bats nested in such as still had roofs. In those open to the sun, scrambling gay creepers grew.

Again he seemed to feel that soul of his which was his father's soul going with him, loathing what he saw and knew, helplessly accursed.

Down worn steps in the rock they found the "dark cells." Weather had wrenched beams and stakes from their foundations; slime oozed on the slanting floors. There was a broken treadmill with a high-water mark on a level with a man's lips, and rusted chains riveted in the wall.

"Good God!" said Marken, withdrawing with a shudder.

Desquesne retorted hotly:

"What else could you expect? They were brutes, animals. He *had* to have the means to avoid rebellion—any disaster." He felt as if it were his father speaking.

"I know you couldn't help it, Dad," he muttered. "Dear old chap, I know how it must have wrung your heart."

They climbed again back to the sun and wind, staggering. Before them a ring of concrete lay sunk in the grass, the beams which once had roofed it slanting down among the nettles and blue convolvuluses. Desquesne peered into the narrow place three-parts filled by a low shelf of concrete built against the wall. Leg- and wrist-irons depended from sockets, holding together what looked merely a mass of the wild scarlet geranium. Desquesne dragged away a long cluster, crushing the scented leaves, and the abrupt movement disturbed what had been long since ready for dissolution. A white bone slipped out and with a rattle struck the floor. Then another!

When they had cleared away the tangle, they found a skeleton, still in chains, but Desquesne scarcely heeded it. With the tangled mass of weed had come a whole crust of lichen from the wall, revealing words that stood out as clear as if written yesterday. And the first word he saw was *"Desquesne."*

Desquesne knelt his knee on the shelf, stretching across that withered end of a man to read what was written of his father in this place. As he read, he felt that his father stood behind him, waiting. Scratched with a nail deep into the concrete, carefully, painfully, the work possibly of many months, even years, he read that dead man's awful testimony beginning:

"Govner Desquesne put me here. He's put me here to rot. I'm the third. Five men dragging a plow on Hells cliff jumped off and were drowned. Now there are guards so more cant do it. He dont want us to die cos then he cant hurt us. He is the devil. May God blarst him. Curses on him and any coming after him. If I die I'll see to it.

Carlos Williams."

THERE was more below, but Desquesne could not distinguish the words. He called Marken, who was whistling out in the sun, and Marken came reluctantly.

"What is it, Charley?" he said.

"Read that," said Desquesne, and felt his father still standing there while Marken read.

"Good God!" said Marken. He shuffled back, not looking at Desquesne. "Of course the fellow must have been mad," he stammered.

Desquesne began to laugh. "Not he," he said. "He's seen to it, just as he said he would. Don't you understand that he's seen to it? He hasn't let one of us escape. Not one! Not one! All gone—destroyed—but me!"

He passed to the door, still laughing. But on the threshold Marken saw him draw himself up, gazing ahead as though into the eyes of a man slightly taller than himself. Then, without a gesture, with the semblance of one who gives the cut direct, he walked on, and down—through the "dark cells"—to the sea.

No one ever saw or heard of him again.

Tomato Soup

From sun-ripened Jersey tomatoes



12 cents a can

CAN'T YOU JUST TASTE IT!

LEAVE IT TO MARGIE

(Continued from page 51)

MR. ZOLNAY, sitting in his inner office, heard the door close with that unnatural softness which always makes the skin creep. Taking his feet down from a chair, he bent sidewise and looked into the anteroom. He stiffened; his gaze became a mixture of curiosity and some alarm. For against his office door there leaned a slender young girl. The dark wood framed her pallor and her evident terror. Her head was thrown back, her white face uplifted, her eyes closed as if she gathered together her spirit before advancing farther. She was rather lovely like that.

"Hello! What do *you* want?"

She started; her eyes opened wide upon him; but she did not let go of the doorknob. "Are you—are you the—the owner of this hotel?" Her voice was a mere whisper.

"Yes, but I can't see anybody. I'm bus—"

But he got no farther, for she crossed the anteroom in a soft little rush of despair. She balanced herself in the doorway of the inner office. "I must see you!" she cried despairingly. "Because I—I have done something dreadful. I have come to" —she leaned against the door-frame, exhausted, faintly panting—"I have come to give myself up. I am a thief."

Mr. Zolnay looked relieved and mildly interested. He was a small, sandy man with cold-boiled eyes that had probably looked up from the cradle at his nurse with suspicion. "Well, you're telling the world," he said dryly. "What have you stolen?"

The girl hung her head; her little hands twisted nervously in and out among the strings of her bead bag. At last with an effort she whispered: "Food."

"Food! In my hotel? Impossible! How did you do it?"

Her head dropped lower. "I ordered it in the restaurant just now. I knew I couldn't pay for it, but I was so, so hungry. The sight of people eating made me crazy. I ate, and then I slipped out when the waiter wasn't looking. I meant to run away, but I couldn't. I can never live and know that I am a thief."

"Can you beat that?" Mr. Zolnay inquired. His hand reached toward an electric button. "This isn't a case for me, but for the house detective. Just wait a minute—"

But at the word "detective," terror like a flame leaped up in the girl; her face became even paler; her large eyes grew wild.

"Oh, please, please, I know I must be arrested, but don't let them put my name in the papers. Oh, please, please! Promise me they wont put my name in the papers! I should have to go back—they would find me—and I cannot go back. I cannot! I would rather die than marry that old man —I would kill myself! And my mother—my darling mother—"

But here her voice failed her. Her dark blue eyes filled with great tears which overflowed. She began to sob, heart-rendingly. She shivered; she looked over her shoulder at the door in terror, and suddenly she sank upon her knees in front of the horrified Mr. Zolnay.

"Jumping Jupiter, what have we here!" he muttered, shrinking back. "I say, get up, there's a good girl—Lordy, I'm glad I'm not alone. I don't know whether this is blackmail or a case for Bellevue—"

"What a mind you have, Hubert!" murmured a voice behind the crouching girl. And a tall, excessively thin young man, who had been sitting unobserved in a corner with his legs tied up in a bowknot and his brow furrowed with pity, moved somewhat diffidently forward. Gingerly he touched the girl's quivering shoulder.

"My dear child, don't, don't cry like that. Hubert doesn't care what your name is. He'd just as soon call you Susy as anything else—wouldn't you, Hubert? Come, come, there's a nice girl—sit on the sofa there, and tell us your troubled tale."

At his appearance the girl had given a small start, but she resumed her sobbing immediately. Docile, but still sobbing, she allowed herself to be led to the sofa. Blindly her small hands fumbled for a handkerchief, and at once the tall young man handed her the immaculate square that had been peeping from his upper left-hand pocket.

"You are so good," she murmured, raising for an instant her drenched blue eyes to his. "I am so a-a-ashamed. I'll—I'll try to be calm now. I'll t-t-try."

And try she did, very bravely, fighting down her sobs, catching a long, quivering breath, almost overtaken again by the storm, conquering again and gradually growing calmer, while the younger man averted an embarrassed gaze, and Mr. Zolnay watched the struggle in interested silence.

"Now, my dear girl," Zolnay said at last, briskly, glancing at his watch, "snap to it and tell us why you helped yourself to a meal on the house. You look like a decent, well-brought-up little girl—"

"Oh, truly I am! But my life has become all dreadful, like a bad dream, and I'm afraid—afraid of what may happen—"

She shuddered, and staring ahead of her unseeingly, the shadows of terror gathered swiftly in her eyes; her face became tragic and wild.

Mr. Zolnay muttered uneasily: "Spill it."

SHE began to tell her story. It was a tale not always easy to follow, for often she became too agitated for coherence; sometimes her voice died in a sob, or she sprang up to walk the floor, an overwrought figure, rehearsing her wrongs. Sometimes she laughed bitterly, and then drooped into brooding silence just at an interesting part and refused to go on.

In that sleek office, the melodramatic phases of her story seemed accented, incredible, and yet as uttered by her bitter young lips more believable than a commonplace hard-luck tale. It developed that she was the innocent victim of her mother's unhappy second marriage. There was a stepfather, who should have been called Black Michael, judging from the terror he inspired. There were convents and abductions, midnight escapes, a sinister place of detention called "The House of Rest," where she had been kept behind bars, a horsewhip and a loathsome old man with a toupee and a million, whom she would be forced to marry, once Black Michael caught her again.

"I thought that here in the city where no one knew me I could work; I could save money to rescue my mother," she cried, standing white and despairful before them, "but no one wants me. I've never been taught to work; I've never even hung up my frocks for myself before. And my money gave out—and I could not resist those lobster pâtés—"

She hung her head, smiling at Mr. Zolnay pathetically under tear-wet lashes. The young man had tied himself up into a knot in a corner of the huge sofa and shaded his face with his hand as if he could not bear much more. Zolnay was breathing hard as if oppressed by strange emotions. It was plain that credulity came hard to him; he didn't know what to do with it, and it pained him. His cold-boiled eyes looked as if they were about to simmer into warmth. He started to chew off the wrong end of a cigar, threw it down, scratched his head restlessly.

"Darndest story I ever heard," he muttered. "Must verify it, o' course. Look here—er—Susy, tell us your name and address, so we can look into this, and we'll do what we can to—"

Her cry of protest stopped him. She leaned against the wall, wan and beautiful, tragically reproachful.

"You do not believe me," she sighed. "I've told you I dare not tell my name. It's a name the newspapers would headline, once they got hold of it. My stepfather would find me then, and I would be dragged back—oh, please, if you cannot believe me, let me go! I will beg in the streets to pay you back— Wait! Take this, and when I can, I will pay you the rest."

Frantically she snatched up the little bead bag, and shook down upon Mr. Zolnay's desk one dollar and nineteen cents and a broken-legged dog. The pitifulness of this was too much for the young man. He sprang forward. "My dear girl, don't mind Hubert. He can't help it. He was born that way. He doesn't believe in anything he can't eat. Now, look here, you let me fix this up—"

His hand went to his change pocket in a gesture that was evidently the most familiar one he made.

But the girl held up a restraining hand, although her eyes were full of a charming gratitude. "No, no," she said in a low voice, "I cannot let you. I cannot begin that way. I will go. Somehow, in some way, I shall earn the money. I don't know how, but I cannot believe that life is so cruel there's no place in it for me."

And with a gesture of beautiful dignity, she turned toward the door, moved one slim foot in front of the other draggingly. At this Zolnay half rose to his feet, while in his face something took place of such rarity as to be called a phenomenon: he blushed.

"Nonsense, my dear girl! I don't want your money! Only, of course, a fellow's got to verify—in these days, you know— wait a minute." He took up the telephone. "Etruscan Room."

The girl shook her head and smiled sadly at the young man. "He doesn't believe me," she repeated.

"Can't help it. Constitutional. Hard-boiled," the young man whispered.

The Etruscan Room did not respond. Mr. Zolnay jiggled the hook and muttered Finally he banged up the receiver. "Look here, old man, suppose you run down and ask Henri about this affair. I suppose the place is so crowded just now they wont answer the telephone. D'you mind?"

"Not at all." The young man moved somewhat reluctantly toward the door, and as he passed the stricken girl he murmured: "Don't you mind him, Susy. I'm for you."

"Oh, thank you!" she breathed faintly.

While the young man crossed the outer office she relaxed against the door-frame, utterly spent, patiently waiting. Mr. Zolnay shuffled some papers upon his desk uneasily. Under her clear, sad gaze he actually fumbled. The outer door closed and they were alone.

AND with that sound the sad girl stirred. Life appeared to move again warmly through her veins. She straightened her hat and stepped buoyantly into the range of Mr. Zolnay's averted vision. She smiled radiantly upon him.

"Well? Don't you think I'm rather good?"

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Mr. Zolnay started sharply at the tone, which was indeed startlingly different from the faint, well-bred sweetness of the little victim of life. He raised his eyes, and the moisture which had gathered there evaporated. Indeed they protruded slightly. "Wha' d'you mean—good?" he gasped.

"Why, good in the part, dear Mr. Zolnay!"

"The—part?"

"*Leonora*—in your new show, you know. Don't you read the script of the shows you're backing, Mr. Zolnay?"

"The shows I'm—say, who *are* you?"

She smiled at him soothingly. "Why, I'm Margie O'Day, the girl *Leonora* was written for—or practically written for. And you said I hadn't the emotional power for the part. You don't think so now, do you, Mr. Zolnay?"

A curious silence filled the office. Margie, motionless, continued to smile, holding her pose of triumph, though deep within the prophetic depths of her, a chill was gathering. And Mr. Zolnay, too, was silent. What had been almost human in his face a moment since, congealed.

"Very—clever." His tone was so dry it crackled.

"Yes, don't you think so?" Her voice was small, and though she continued to smile, she knew she was on the brink of learning something about men. Afterward she summed it up to herself: never, never let a man with cold-boiled eyes know that you have taken him in. Few men can bear that knowledge, but the cold-boiled ones least of all.

"Very clever," Mr. Zolnay repeated. "Too much so. Good afternoon."

He rose; he took a fresh cigar from a box and lit a match while she stared at him incredulously.

"Why, Mr. Zolnay, what do you mean? Surely you don't mind my taking a chance to show you what I can do with an emotional rôle? It was the only way I could make you listen to me—"

Mr. Zolnay made a gesture with one hand and said: "Young lady, no one can make a fool out of me and get away with it afterward. That's that. Good afternoon."

She had lost. A good exit was the only thing left for her. It was cruelly hard to smile, to give a little indifferent shrug of her shoulders, but she managed it. "Still, I *was* pretty good, wasn't I?" she murmured, and offered her hand.

For an instant it looked as if he was not going to be a sportsman, but Margie O'Day's blue eyes were very provocative. One corner of his stony lips quivered; grudgingly he met her hand. "Yes, you're good, all right, but you're a rotten judge of human nature."

"No, I'm not." She sighed, waved a regretful hand at him, put up her chin, and stepped lightly out of the door.

ARTHUR MASON
has sailed windjammers for thirty years on the sea, not in a library on a flat-topped desk. And the best story he's ever written is—
"The Cuckoo Clock"
It will appear in an early issue of this magazine.

ONCE the velvet curtain had fallen behind her, however, the smile died from her lips. She felt an exhaustion strange to her, a disappointment so sharp that it hurt her physically. She reached the top of the stairs and started down them blindly. But before she had reached the lobby floor, she felt a touch on her arm and a voice cried: "I say, where are you going—er—Susy?"

So deep was she in despair that it took her several seconds to recognize the young man. With difficulty she hastily reassumed her rôle of the little victim of life. "I don't know. Out—anywhere—what does it matter?"

"But, look here, you can't do that, you know! Out is a lonesome place. Look here—be a sensible girl and let a fellow help you. Just now I was visited by an idea—er, Susy. You don't mind my calling you Susy, do you?"

She leaned wearily against the wall. "No, I don't mind."

"Thank you. Well, here's the idea. If you say so, I'll go after that frightful stepfather of yours and give him the scare of his life."

"Oh, my goodness!" She stared at him, her lip quivering with emotion. She suddenly wanted to laugh aloud, but there was something about the young man that restrained her. She gave him, for the first time, an appraising stare. He was plainly one of the innocents, and as such he deserved attention—there were few enough left in the world. He was dressed in clothing of the most expensive sort, but he wore it so carelessly that it was evident he was born to purple and fine linen. His cravat, evidently chosen with prayer, was askew; one glove was missing; the collar of his English ulster stuck up under one ear. He had the most temperamental eyebrows she had ever seen. They quivered quite easily, and one of them being higher than the other and more eager, gave him somewhat the expression of a Skye terrier.

But under these eccentric brows his eyes were so filled with an eager friendliness that the slight contempt she had felt for one so easily taken in gave way to pity.

"Poor lamb!" she thought. "He oughtn't to wander around among us." Then she brought her attention back to his plan for defying Black Michael.

"Oh, you are so good," she sighed, "but I couldn't let you in for trouble. And it's no use, anyway. I shall just have to go on by myself. But, thank you a thousand times. And good night—good—"

But he broke into her farewell. He could not see her go out into the streets without money, without a job. She needed a friend and he intended to be one. She gave him a sharp glance. On the lips of another sort of man this phrase would have evoked a scornful laugh from Margie O'Day, but somehow she found in herself no inclination to laugh at this earnest well-wisher. But, of course, he must be got rid of somehow. She thanked him again, sweetly, with dismissal, and continued on her way down the stairs.

The young man, however, was persistent in his gentle way. When she stepped into the street he was at her elbow. If she had not been so completely disheartened and weary she would have felt somewhat irritated, but nothing mattered very much just now. She had played the only card she possessed, and the whole weary round of the agencies and the managers' offices would have to begin again tomorrow. And now the season was in full swing. She knew just how poor a chance she stood of stepping into anything worth while. It would be all the more of a grind, since for weeks she had believed herself to be sure at last of a real part and a Broadway opening. And how was she to live until something turned up for her?

She was conscious all at once of her friendlessness. She had scores of acquaintances, but no one from whom she would care to borrow a dollar. She reflected bitterly that it didn't pay to make independence your creed and no human being your confidant. She looked up at the relentless electric signs. Horrible things, advertising food and motorcars and fur coats. She hated them; she hated Broadway, her Main Street.

"What a life! Mean, underpaid, ungrateful, taking our youth and giving us a little glory for overnight, or maybe giving us nothing. No decency, no honor anywhere, no friends when you need them, no—home—"

Her eyes were blinded by sudden tears. She stepped off the curb in front of a taxicab. The cab veered sharply; she felt herself jerked back to the curb by a surprisingly firm hand.

"You see! You're not fit even to cross the street," her new friend remarked mildly.

"I wish you'd go along and leave me alone." She spoke crossly, and furtively wiped her eyes. "I crossed streets before you were born."

Then she recalled that this was not in keeping with her latest rôle. But apparently he had not heard. He stood wrinkling his brows at her in painful sympathy. "Wont you tell me where you live so I can take you safely there?"

She thought of Dolly's rooms with a shudder. The truth was she was afraid to go back there. To go back to the smell of *quelques fleurs* and carbona, to those rooms so alien to herself, to go back defeated and hopeless, was impossible. She knew a girl once who had killed herself in just such circumstances. Not that she would ever—She shivered and choked.

The young man hovered in shy unhappiness. But she had forgotten him again.

ON the curb she balanced herself for a long moment, too full of a forlorn indecision to think. Then she drifted off north, a little moth among the lights. All around her, toward a score of stage doors, fortunate mortals hastened. She felt sick with longing each time she looked down a side-street and saw one of the familiar fireproof doors. And at the same time she told herself that she hated the heartless and cruel street.

But she continued to follow its length uptown, and at her side the young man strolled. She was scarcely aware of him at first, but after a while she felt a certain vague comfort in his presence, a faint warmth in a world full of a bleak chill wind. She wavered across the garish spaces of Columbus Circle, hesitated before the dark shadows of the Park, and then walked on in the shadow of its westward wall.

The young man gave up trying to match her unequal steps and strolled with his loose stride, preoccupied, his hands in his pockets, his stick dangling from one arm. Now and then he looked up at a dingy metropolitan moon rising reluctantly over the rounded treetops of the Park, and sighed.

Somewhere in the Seventies, Margie abruptly stopped and leaned against the Park wall. "Oh, dear, I'm dog-tired!"

Instantly the young man came out of a dream. "So am I. Starving, too! Aren't you?"

She nodded. The lobster pâtés had been to her a mere appetizer. The young man led the way to a near-by hotel.

In the red velvet domesticity of a long dining-room he conveyed to a head waiter that the little table in the corner would be suitable. The food he ordered was notably nourishing. They did not speak again until the soup plates were removed.

And then Margie looked around her. Down the center of the room at round

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tables various family parties were dining, fathers and mothers and young daughters home from school for the week-end. Margie looked at the young girls wistfully.

"It must be wonderful—to be safe like that," she murmured.

His expressive eyebrows twitched. "I wish you would let me—"

"Don't! Don't start that help talk again. No one can help me, I guess—not the way I'm made. If I was like Dolly—" She broke off abruptly, remembering in the nick of time that she was a tenderly reared little victim of a wicked stepfather. The roast came and she gave it her undivided attention. Conversation languished again. They finished a substantial dessert and once more sought the street. And there on the curb, buffeted by the gusts of the autumnal night, something happened that partook of the miraculous.

Whether it was the plentiful hot food, or her natural disinclination to remain long submerged in gloom, Margie suddenly felt happier. She looked up at her faithful companion with a sudden compunction. What a grouch she had been, mouching along and refusing to be friendly. She lifted her face and smiled faintly. And when Margie smiled even faintly a sudden charm disengaged itself and reached out to stir the heart of the nearest onlooker. For there was something very sweet in a certain tender curve at the corner of her mouth; and her wise eyes grew suddenly young and friendly.

THE light from a near-by lamp fell full upon this smile. As if this unexpected thing were not devastating enough, Margie suddenly reached up an absent-minded hand and straightened the young man's wild cravat. The gesture meant nothing to her. Men, too, meant nothing to her unless they happened to be producers with a new play to cast. But she could not bear a crooked cravat.

The young man stared down at her. To her intense surprise she saw that his face had flamed and then paled, and she saw in his eyes something genuine and rather rare in her experience.

"My goodness gracious," she thought, "he's falling in love with me, the poor lamb."

"Look here, wont you—" began the young man, in a choked sort of voice.

"No, I wont. I don't know what it is, but I wont." But because she was, in the depths of her, sweet, she could not help saying it tenderly, with a touch of the maternal. "He's got the most honest eyes I've ever seen," she thought. And a small ache came unaccountably into her heart.

"I want to go home," she sighed. Dolly Van Ingen's rooms—they would cure him. "No, no cab. We'll take a street-car."

They crowded into the small elevator along with a West Indian negro who ogled and whistled through his teeth and a girl with a face like a marshmallow, whose fur coat smelled of *narcisse* and benzine, and came to the door of Dolly's flat. She let the full awfulness of Dolly's sitting-room burst upon him with the switching on of all the lights. Dolly had often said how lucky it was that just at the beginning of her streak of luck the Viennese shop should have had its sale and she could do her sitting-room after Joseph Urban. A velvet carpet of a black-and-white checkerboard pattern, clandestine lamps, furniture all heathen curves, a screen like green-and-purple lightning, cushions everywhere, in murderous black and violent orange.

The young man caught his breath. "Whew! Do you—is this—"

"No, I don't. It isn't. Belongs to a friend of mine."

Margie O'Day tossed her wrap and hat through the portières of Dolly's bedroom onto the bed. She ran her hands wearily up through her bright hair, and walking to the window gazed down upon the flowing golden serpent of Broadway. What a squeamish fool she was! Dolly would have gobbled up this young man without a qualm. But she couldn't. Instead, she felt as if she ought to take him under her protective wing. He was nice. She liked him in an odd sort of tender way that had nothing to do with sentimentality. She wished that she had had a brother like him, to bully and play with and take care of.

Shying away from the chaotic exuberance of the sofa, he came to stand beside her at the window. "You're awfully difficult. You've glazed yourself over against me. I want to understand your difficulties and do something about them. If you knew how easy it would be for me—I've got so much money I'm ashamed of it—"

"Well, you wont have it long, if you don't stay off Broadway," she snapped.

For the first time he laughed, a quick chuckle. But he changed the subject at once. "Let's talk about you, you wise little thing. Tell me again about that stepfather and your poor mother—"

"Oh, don't. That's out. Listen to me. Sit down over there. I may as well spill it, and have it over with. Do sit down. You'll stand the shock better."

He subsided gingerly amidst the furious cushions and looked at her intently, his eyebrows more than ever like a Skye terrier's. But first he said quickly: "You don't have to tell me, really. I—like you so much, nothing matters."

SHE threw herself into a chair and gave her head an impatient shake. "I know I'm a fool, but—look here, I'm not the helpless violet you think I am. And my mother's dead, poor darling. She had far too much sense ever to marry twice. So the wicked stepfather's out too. And I'm not little Susy-from-the-country. Oh, dear me, no! Since I came out of boarding-school at seventeen I've earned my own cakes and clothes, every smitch of them. I'm a poor but honest member of the most ungrateful profession in the world. In short, I'm a little, old, hard-boiled trouper."

Her face quivered into a rather anxious smile, and she lifted her lids appealingly. But his face, for one so sensitive, remained oddly expressionless. "I see," he said gravely. "I'd like to know more about it. To be a trouper—that's to be on the road, isn't it?"

"Yes, poor lamb." The phrase was for both herself and him. "On the road— Oh dear, oh dear! What a life. Sleeper-jumps, new parts to learn when your eyelids burn from lack of sleep, terrible food, biliousness from too much bad coffee, musty feathers in hotel pillows, cuspidors and dirty red-velvet carpets, cinders—ugh! Awful! But—"

"Yes?" he prompted her softly.

Margie laughed a little. "Funny things happen, though. I remember one scream that happened once in Dakota when I was playing the saxophone with one of those sister orchestras when there absolutely wasn't anything else to be landed. Dakota in winter—the snow packing down inside our overshoes as we waded out that night. The show was in a church, one of those churches that have a tank underneath the platform—to baptize people in, you know. And right in the middle of Poppy Jenks' cornet solo there came a splintering and a groaning and the floor of that platform gave way and we all slid down into the tank."

"Good heavens! Was it—"

"No, it wasn't. It seems they only filled it when somebody was to be dipped." Margie O'Day's lilting laughter filled the room. She had come down underneath Poppy Jenks that night and sprained her wrist, besides ruining her only presentable evening frock. And afterward they had driven through marrow-freezing weather to catch a midnight train at a junction, but it was all in the day's work. And all in the day's work were broken contracts, and shows that failed, and the jealousy of stars.

"Tell me some more," he said when she paused. "How did you happen to go on the stage?"

"Happen? I was just about born on the stage. My mother and my grandmother were in the profession. My mother—poor lamb! You ought to have known her. Versatile, talented, brave—and unlucky. Poor darling, I had to leave her in a hospital while I went on to earn the money to keep her there. But, thank God, I had a week with her at the end. Afterward it seemed as if I could never act again. I hated a life that had been so hard and ungrateful to her. But I went on. I had to—and here I am—flat!"

"You don't like the profession?"

She leaned forward, her elbows on her knees, brooding. "That's the funny part of it. I hate it, but I keep on. I suppose the hardest thing to kill is hope. Somehow, deep inside me, is something I believe in. I know I've got just a bit of the real thing. And that bit repays me when I'm acting. You don't know, I can't tell you, the wonder of that instant when something happens and I click into the skin of a new character. It makes up for everything. I've known it to happen when I've been hungry and awful low, and instantly I've felt such happiness, such absolute satisfaction, as nothing else on earth could give me. I suppose that's what keeps me going."

She sprang up and walked restlessly to the window. His eyes gleaming under the eccentric eyebrows followed her.

"But it's the most precarious profession in the world," he urged. "Only one in a thousand ever gets a chance—"

"Don't I know it?" she cried.

"It pays for youth and then wastes it."

"Yes—oh, yes!"

"And it makes no provision for its discards."

"Don't!"

The young man was staring intently at her averted face, now. All around him he had tortured sofa cushions into wretched windrows; he had somehow twisted his cravat and rumpled his hair. He now leaned forward as if waiting for the crack of doom.

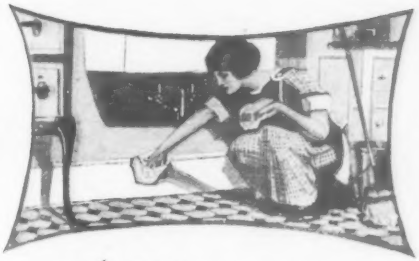
"If you—if you were offered a marriage," he stammered, "that would give you ease and most anything you wanted in the world, on condition that you leave the stage, would you accept it?"

She did not look at him, but instead she leaned her forehead against the pane and stared down at the incandescence of Broadway.

THE silence lasted for a long moment, and then she drew a long breath. "No," she said, "I wouldn't accept. Because nothing could ever make up to me

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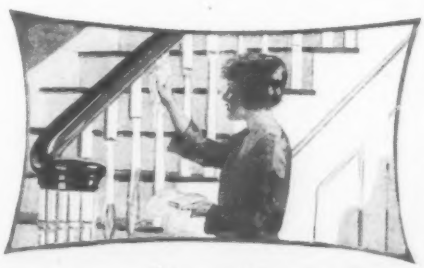
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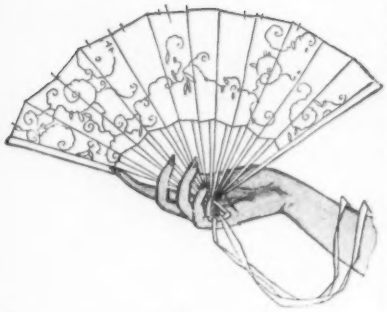
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for the loss of that moment when I know I can act. And sooner or later, I'd break any promise I had given that kept me off the stage. I'm made that way, and that way I'll die."

Something flamed up in the young man's eyes that was oddly like triumph. He fell back among the pillows, smiling up at the ceiling.

Margie O'Day shook herself, stretched, sighed and turned around. "Were you by any chance proposing to me?"

But the young man did not reply. He appeared to be lost in not unpleasing abstractions. Presently he said, out of empty spaces:

"You're a darned good *Leonora*, my child."

The shock of it stiffened her where she stood in the middle of the room. "*Leonora!* What—what do you know about her? My goodness gracious, who are you, anyway?"

The young man sat up, twinkling at her gayly. "I'm *Leonora's* parent, so to speak. In other words, I'm—I'm the author of the piece."

"*No!*" The word fairly exploded through the room, so enormous was her amazement. "How utterly awful!"

"Not at all! I thoroughly enjoyed your clever use of my child. And, d'you know—you gave me one or two darned good lines. And stage business! *Useful* is a pale word to describe it."

"Well!" Indignation was rising in her tone. "Then everything that's happened since has just been underhanded amusement for you? You've led me on to spill everything out. And what you said just now about would I leave the stage was just—just—"

He sprang up with surprising quickness, and took both her hands. His face was genuinely shocked. "No, no, you don't get me at all. I meant it when I asked if you would consider—consider marriage. I said that, first, because I want to marry you, and second, because I wanted to know exactly how much of an artist you are. If you had said you would leave the stage I should have been horribly disappointed."

"But why?"

"Why? Because I'm going to write a play for you. A much better play than *Leonora*. A gorgeous play, a—"

"Wait! Do you mean you're going to write a play for *me*, just for me, you, with every producer in New York after you, and four successes behind you? A part for me, and make them let me play it? Oh, no. I can't believe that. I can believe a good deal, but that's too much. You mustn't make jokes like that, you know."

He held her two hands very tight and shook them gently. "But it is true, dear little Susy. And the play is your play, for you gave me the idea for it when you were doing *Leonora* for Zolnay this afternoon. And you gave me a line at dinner when you said: 'It must be wonderful to be safe.' And you gave me hope for the profession when you refused to leave it just now. And besides, you *are* the heroine of what's going to be the best thing I've ever done. So there's nothing more to be said."

Margie continued to stare at him as in a daze. "You mean that—that, unconditionally—"

He bent and looked into her frightened eyes. "My dear, just forget the long road. You've come to the top of the hill, now. That little bit of something real in you is going to have its chance to shine out. There aren't any conditions attached. There never will be as long as I have any power. All you've got to do is to act better than any other girl on Broadway. And I'm betting you can do it. That's all. What do you say?"

She began to sob and to laugh at the same time. And all she could say was: "L-l-leave it to Margie."

SACKCLOTH AND SCARLET

(Continued from page 89)

her. This revelation had taken him off his balance. The first thought that he had thrown out instinctively in self-defense—that this woman was lying to him for some purpose of her own—had passed. Whatever her purpose, she was not lying now. There was a child, *his* child—a shameful pledge between them. He felt that she had wanted him to understand this—to bring him to an accounting for her misfortune and their sin.

A preposterous claim now, and yet—

"You have been married since then. What do you want me to do? I will do what a man should. Where is the child?"

"Yes, I was married," she evaded him again. "Such a marriage!"

He stood in a moment of deep thought, shocked by the bitterness of her tone.

When he next spoke, his words fell crisply—a dry statement of facts bare of subterfuge.

"You realize, don't you, that this marriage of yours brought an end to my obligation to you?"

She looked up at him quickly, her earpendants jingling. Her fingers clutched her handkerchief tightly, and her whole figure seemed to grow rigid.

"You feel that way, do you?" she said sharply. "You have no sense of any moral obligation?"

"I've told you that I would make such amends as I could to the child," he replied coolly.

"Oh, I see."

She was pathetic no longer. They were now on more even terms. He stopped before her suspiciously. "Where is this child? You haven't answered me."

She twisted away from him toward the window.

"No," she said with a quick shrug of defiance. "I will when I'm ready. I'm beginning to understand the kind of a man you are."

"What more did you expect from me?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing, I suppose," she said bitterly, her voice rising. "I'm just—just a woman out of your past, a poor creature whose claims you can afford to despise, because they're not legal claims that can harm you—"

"Mrs. Drake, I beg—"

She groped for the arm of the chair, stumbled into it.

IN the next room the typewriter clicked on. The sound of it steadied Edwards. It was impossible to believe that Hastings should not have heard the querulous raising of her voice.

"I can't stay here if you don't make an effort to control yourself. This isn't a thing to be shouted from the housetop," he said sternly.

She leaned suddenly forward.

"Yes. You'll stay here," she said hoarsely "I've something more to say to you—something you wont like. You want me to take all the blame for what happened, all the suffering, all the humiliation. But I wont. You'll have to take your share of that too. You say that my marriage to Joe Drake put an end to your obligations to me. Perhaps it did in the way you mean. But it hasn't put an end to my will to demand what is my right—"

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(A letter from Mr. T. C. Hinkle of Baldwin, Kansas)



"A martyr to indigestion and constipation, I was as thin as a rake with a complexion like mud. I had tried many different kinds of tonics and laxatives without permanent relief. I was advised to try Fleischmann's Yeast. In about four months my constipation and indigestion had disappeared. I am now in perfect health and look it. My complexion is clear and the envy of all who know me. I have more vigor and look many years younger than I did."

(A letter from Mrs. P. F. Robin, Mobile, Ala.)



"I was only 24 years old, my health, my good looks, and the old time dynamic energy, which I had believed so permanently mine, were gone. A man of wisdom is my physician, but I thought him indeed crazy when he prescribed three yeast cakes a day. But at the end of a month I was surprised to find that the world looked much better to my tired eyes. For two months more I took the Yeast and now I am well and happy, the old-time buoyancy and energy are mine again."

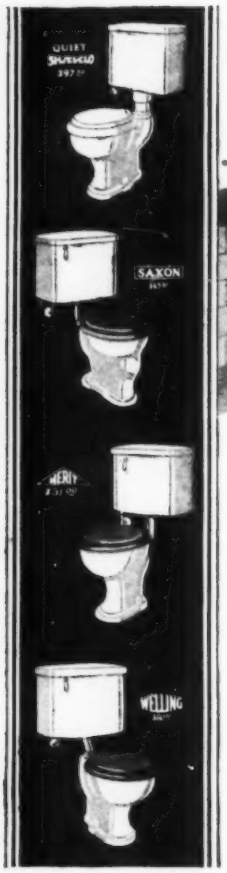
(A letter from Miss Elva Tanner, Clover, Utah)

"One day the chef at the country club suggested that I try Fleischmann's Yeast. I was haggard, anaemic, and had lost all interest in life. I smiled, reminding him of my previous experiences with 'tonics.' He began serving me with what he called a special cheese sandwich daily. A month elapsed, and everyone marvelled at my complete transformation. One day I saw the chef spreading Fleischmann's Yeast on sandwiches and realized that I had been the butt of what he thought was a good joke."

(Mr. Herbert J. Hoffman of Philadelphia, Pa.)



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"Demand?" he asked ironically.

"Yes, demand," she repeated. She rose and walked the length of the room, as though recriminations alone were not enough to rid her of the devils that possessed her. "I'll tell you what I mean. I suppose you think I haven't noticed the way things are between Joan and you—"

"We needn't speak of that."

"We've got to speak of it, and you've got to listen. Well, she'll never marry you—never, not when she knows what I'll tell her about you—that you're the man who brought my trouble on me. She always hated the thought of that man—that creature of Paradise Valley who made all this unhappiness for me and for her. She would never let me speak of you, because the thought of what you'd done was loathsome to her. She abominated you always." She turned at the mantel and shook with laughter, while he regarded her, fascinated by the shameful things she uttered. She looked at him with brows raised and then laughed again. "It's too good a joke. You—her best friend—her—her lover—yet the unknown man she has always abhorred—"

Her words died in mid-air, withered by his sudden fury. He strode toward her, and she shrank back in terror, against the wall.

"Don't speak of Joan, d'ye hear!" he exclaimed, his speech reverting curiously to a former usage. "You leave her out of this."

"I—I can't leave her out of it," she stammered, frightened but still facing him. "Because she's a part of it—she and Jack."

"Jack!"

"Yes, Jack. He's not her son. He's mine and yours!"

He drew back from her in sudden silence. Then neither of them moved for a moment. From the next room the typewriter keys clicked composedly.

"There! I've told you," she gasped. "Jack—he's your son—"

If she had intended to win her victory with a word, his appearance must have given her the idea that no more blows were needed. He stood with one hand to his brow as though it were there that she had struck him. And gathering courage from his weakness, she smiled and turned away. He followed her slowly with his gaze.

"Jack—my son! Then how—"

He gathered his thoughts with difficulty. "Then what has Joan to do—I mean, why has Joan—" He straightened, his brow clearing. "You mean that all these years Joan has cared for the boy, while you—" Words seemed to congest upon his tongue. "You mean you let her suffer *your* humiliation all these years? You let her do that? Why did she do it? What was her reason? You lied to me when you spoke of her in Atlantic City. Tell me the truth now if you can. She lied to save you. That was it, wasn't it? That must have been it—the sort of thing she *would* do. A sacrifice to save your good name—the sacrifice of her own? Good God! Can't you speak?"

"What's the use," said Polly lightly, "since you've worked the whole thing out in your own way? I had my chance to marry. I offered to provide for the baby. But she wanted him. I let her have him. She didn't have to make any sacrifices for me or anybody else. That was just sentimental rot—her keeping silent."

Edwards had turned to the mantel, his face bent into his hands. He had not needed this new joy in Joan's nobility to fill his own cup of humiliation. It all seemed so clear to him now, every detail of Joan's strength and resolution. Her love for the boy—that would have been enough—a devotion that had been born of the baby's very innocence of the offense that she detested. Polly Drake was not lying now. Jack was his boy. He knew it, and wondered why he had not guessed the truth from the mere instinct that had drawn them together. Every new thought that brought Joan and Jack more tenderly into his heart was a new indictment of his sin. The words of his visitor rushed back at him like pointed weapons: "You—her friend, her lover—the man she has always abhorred."

Joan would hate him, of course. He had lost her—and Jack, her boy and his son, the creature that had first brought them together, the link that had held them together until the new one had been forged—

EDWARDS raised his head, saw his haggard face in the mirror, an old man's face that stared as though at a stranger. Then he slowly turned toward Polly Drake. She had found her chair by the table, and as he looked, fumbled in her wrist-bag and put her fingers to her lips. She was not looking at him, did not seem aware of his presence. Then she drew out a cigarette, deftly lighted it and inhaled deeply. He did not hate her, and wondered why. He just gazed at her curiously—with a new kind of curiosity that had to do with matters that lay deeper than the new relation that she was attempting to impose upon him. What was the motive that lay behind this revelation? What her relationship to Joan, after these years of renunciation? She had told him all this because it was right that he should know, of course. But there was a motive behind the confession—a cruelty that sprang from thoughts he could not guess. Her rage had astounded him—a series of fierce gusts of accumulating grievances that had swept her on relentlessly. And she had yielded to them, willingly or not. He stared at her, trying to solve the mystery. The cigarette seemed to have calmed her, for she met his gaze with a thin smile.

"Well?" she asked.

The aggressive coolness of her tone hardened him.

"What do you want of me?" he asked.

"I haven't said that I wanted anything, have I?"

"But you do. What is it? You want me to give you money?"

"There! I thought you were going to be brutal."

"Isn't that what you're after?"

She gave a shrug.

"One has to live!" she said lightly.

He stared at her in amazement. Her impertinence was bewildering. She had no claims on him—none except what he chose in charity to give her. But he had never been one to yield to threats—for this, he decided, was the game that she was playing. Her attitude had angered him, but was slightly amusing too. He had a curiosity to know the lengths that she was prepared to go in carrying out her purpose. And so he cupped his chin in his hand, staring at her.

"And if I refuse to see your side of this question, what will you do?"

She flashed around at him.

"Merely tell Joan the whole truth. Then of course, I'll take Jack."

He saw for the first time into the empty heart of this creature who had come to him with her vile project. He had no money for her, whatever happened. He controlled his voice with difficulty.

"You mean that you would take him away from your sister after all these years?"

"Why not? He's mine, isn't he? He's a fine boy, and I—I'm very much alone."

"But he's hers. You've said that. She's been his mother since he was born."

"But not *when* he was born. There's a difference," she said coolly. "Even you must see that."

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The Medium shade of Pompeian Bloom should most often be used with the Naturelle shade of Pompeian Beauty Powder. There are some exceptions, of course, but in the great majority of cases this is true.

The Light shade of Pompeian Bloom should be used with Naturelle, Flesh, or occasionally with the White Pompeian Beauty Powder, depending on whether the skin tends toward yellow, pink, or the colorless white skin.

The Dark shade of Pompeian Bloom should be used most often with Rachel and in some cases with the Naturelle shade of Pompeian Beauty Powder.

The Orange Tint has an exceptional value in tone and obtains slightly varying results with different powders and types of skin. It is quite gold or orange-colored in its compact form, but when it is rubbed onto the skin it becomes a rarely delightful tint that has the natural brilliancy of a maiden's cheek with its first touch of sun-kisses.

This rouge is often affected by women during the summer, as it combines beautifully with the warmer tints of the skin exposed to out-of-door activities. It is also the most successful rouge for the woman "with honey tones in her skin." It complements the Naturelle, and occasionally may be used with the White or the Rachel shade of Beauty Powder.

How to apply your rouge

Having selected your shade of Pompeian Bloom, and found its complementing shade of Pompeian Beauty Powder, your attention should be centered on the necessity of "How to apply it so that it looks completely natural."

The color in your cheeks forms an area that is somewhat triangular in shape. It begins at the highest point of your cheekbone and sweeps outward toward the upper line of your ears, then slanting downward it approaches the corners of your mouth. But never with hard lines! Never with any circumscribed rule of covering cheeks—rather with a perfect blending of rosy cheeks with a clear skin.

Pompeian Bloom, 60c. (In Canada, 65c)

After reading my descriptions of types of skin and rouge-tones, you probably will be able to go directly to your favorite shop and buy the shade of Pompeian Bloom your skin needs. Price 60c per box. (In Canada, 65c.) If you are in doubt between two tones, check them on the coupon below and I will send you, without charge, a sample of each.

MADAME JEANNETTE

Pompeian Bloom—a rouge

Pompeian Bloom comes in a dainty gilt box, and is an attractive accessory in your handbag.



© 1924, The Pompeian Co.

MADAME JEANNETTE, Pompeian Laboratories
Dept. 620, Cleveland, Ohio
Dear Madame: Not being entirely certain which tone of Pompeian Bloom is best suited to my skin tone, I wish to test the two shades checked below.

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____

Please check the two shades desired for test

☐ Medium ☐ Dark ☐ Light ☐ Orange Tint

"Impossible," he muttered. "You don't love the boy. You've never loved him, or you wouldn't have deserted him. Why do you want him now?"

"He's mine—"

"No," he went on tensely. "You want him because Joan wants him—because he's the only thing she has that you can claim."

"Really—"

"That's the truth. You owe your sister too much to breed anything but resentment. That's the sort of gratitude that grows out of an obligation like yours to Joan." He leaned forward across the table, scourging her with his look and words. "You've been willing all these years to let her suffer for your sin and mine, but you're not going to take from her the one thing that's left to her. You're not going to have my help or my money. I'll find a way to keep Jack out of your hands. He's mine as well as yours. And it's my wish that he stay with Joan."

She had sprung to her feet away from him. She had failed. Anger and disappointment engulfed her.

"You mean this?" she gasped.

"Yes, I do. I—"

He paused, and they both turned toward the door into the hallway, beyond which were heard the sounds of a commotion, a man's voice, a woman's raised in protestation. And then the door flew open, and Madam de Selignac entered quickly. Behind her stood Bob Hastings and Joan.

Chapter Thirty-one

THE solution of the mystery of Joan's life with Jack had come to Beatrice de Selignac in the interview with Stephen Edwards which confirmed her shrewd guess as to Polly Drake. With Polly's identity established as the woman out of Stephen's past, it had not been difficult by a careful analysis of the calendar in its relation to the pilgrimage of the sisters to Pleveneuf, to decide that Jack's birth had been the result of the visit to Lake Louise. In this investigation Natalie Bain had helped her, having been invited to lunch for that purpose. The dates confirmed, the remaining parts of the picture-puzzle fitted accurately into their places.

But having accomplished this purpose, Beatrice was helpless. She felt her inadequacy in the situation the more poignantly because she had, from the beginning, been the chief sponsor of the friendship between Stephen and Joan. The barrier between them seemed to have grown in breadth and thickness. Joan the innocent, the ignorant one, was ready to relent. Beatrice knew that if Stephen had come again to the house asking her to marry him, she would have taken him. But Stephen would not come.

The thought of Polly was disturbing. Beatrice had taken Polly's measure during the drive to Joan's home from the Union Station. And though the data that she had gathered added the finishing touches to her picture-puzzle, they presented at the same time a threat to the happiness of her two friends. Far better than Joan, Beatrice understood that Polly had come to Washington defeated by the world, a broken creature, a spiritual degenerate and possibly a physical one. The eavesdropping incident was an arrow to show which way the wind was to blow. Poliy had sought information about Stephen and Joan. It would not be long before she would be making use of it.

But given the established facts, the psychology of the situation was not difficult. Joan, in her innocence of the facts, loved Stephen for all that he had been to her, his tenderness, his loyalty in the face of every evil thing that had been said against her. She loved him too, Beatrice believed, because the simplicity and breadth of his motives were so like Joan's own that each was the natural complement of the other. But how heavily would those considerations weigh in the scale against the one abominable fact that Polly now presented. Beatrice feared greatly and mourned in secret over the tragic culmination of this romance. Everything else that had happened to separate them now seemed merely childish beside this last and most formidable obstacle.

Beatrice tried to put herself in Joan's place. She had loved greatly and forgiven greatly. Life with Beatrice had been a succession of forgivenesses. But Joan was not like Beatrice. If more patient, she was more tenacious; if more constant, she was less compromising. She was proud, too, obstinate, dogmatic in her sense of right and wrong. Where Beatrice was facile and sophisticated, Joan was elemental. So while Beatrice was sure that she herself would have forgiven Stephen Edwards and forgotten Polly's existence, she was far from certain that Joan would do so. How much did Joan love this man? Everything seemed to hang upon the strength of that passion. Was that passion, too, elemental? Had Joan been so long starved that Stephen would be more necessary to her than anything else in the world? There had been times when Joan had shown the observant Beatrice a kind of ferocity in her devotion to the causes of Stephen Edwards. It was Joan's way to do nothing lightly. Her devotion and loyalty to Jack in the face of the world had shown that. She was a woman past thirty, the turning-point of passion, when love is either glorified in splendid maturity, or fades in vague compromises. Would she seize her opportunity for happiness with magnificent toleration, or would she for conventional moral precedents let it go forever?

Beatrice did not know. She was undecided as to what she should do. But instinct warned her to keep a watch on Polly. A vague plan had formed in her mind to put the situation to the touch—to bring the elements of this strange formula into conjunction and let the gods and Joan decide what solution must come out of it. Every motive of kindness advised that Joan should no longer remain in ignorance of the situation. Beatrice knew that Joan had not yet written to Stephen, but she also knew that his silence and his absence had made her unhappy. These conditions could not endure. So Beatrice decided to take the situation into her own hands.

THE telephone message from Mr. Hastings was the signal for immediate action. She was, fortunately, dressed; and telephoning Joan to be ready for a drive, she went at once to the house. She had already prepared the way in a series of conversations with Joan about Stephen Edwards. Joan had admitted that she had been very definite at Atlantic City in her refusal to permit him to speak again of personal matters —either of the scandalous stories of Mr. Curtis, or of the more intimate topic of Stephen's proposal. And Beatrice, very skillfully following the advantage gained from this information, used the obvious arguments that Stephen was more in love with her than ever, that it was this rebuff that had sent him back to Washington. That theory, of course, explained the telegram that was never received. It also very definitely explained his avoidance of her, and his silence.

Joan had listened, and at last had agreed that it was quite possible that Beatrice was right. Beatrice had been delighted with that reply, which showed that love was working on her side. Beatrice had thence carried her game to a point where Joan was on the ragged edge of irresolution, and ready for the culminating argument.

She waited until Joan was seated beside her in the machine, their ostensible object a tour of the F Street shops, when Beatrice broached her subject lightly.

"I've got to stop at Stephen Edwards' apartment on the way, to take a book I promised him. You don't mind, do you?"

"Not at all."

"It's a good time to catch him before he goes to the Capitol. Don't you think it would be nice of you, Joan, just to leave your card?"

Joan was silent, looking out of the window.

"Or better yet, come up with me," she added carelessly. "I think you owe him that, Joan dear. I'm only going to stop a moment."

"If I was sure—" she paused.

"Of what?"

"That he would be glad to see me."

Beatrice gave a sagacious laugh, then looked at Joan quizzically.

"He may dissemble his antipathy, my dear. But I don't think he'll throw you out."

Joan could not help smiling, but said nothing in reply.

"At any rate," Beatrice went on gayly, "Mr. Hastings and I will chaperon you."

The machine bowled rapidly down Connecticut Avenue, past the British Embassy into the region of shops. There was not more than a moment in which to decide. Beatrice wisely said no more, but when the car drew up at the door of the apartment, she sprang lightly out.

"Coming?" she asked.

"Yes," Joan said, and followed her.

AS they went up in the elevator, a hundred possibilities of failure flashed through the mind of Beatrice—that Stephen might not have returned, that Polly might not yet have arrived, that Mr. Hastings might bar the way. This last possibility Beatrice had already discounted. As faithful watchdog, Mr. Hastings did not greatly alarm her.

She touched the button at the door of the apartment, committing Joan definitely to the situation, then turned to her with a quick, tense whisper.

"Whatever happens, Joan—follow me in. You've got to now."

"What—what do you mean?" Joan gasped.

"Don't falter now, for God's sake."

"Beatrice! I must know—" she began, when the door was opened by Mr. Hastings.

"It's very necessary for me to see Mr. Edwards at once," said Beatrice, calmly entering the hallway.

Hastings was too gallant to stand in front of her. But he spoke quickly:

"Mr. Edwards is engaged at the moment. I don't think he can see you. If you'll come back a little later—"

"Beatrice!" gasped Joan.

The sound of voices came from beyond the closed door at the end of the hallway. Beatrice glanced through the open office door.

"Mrs. Drake is there, isn't she?" Beatrice remarked. And then calmly walking toward

"The Fourth Degree"

is the title of the next case of the ingenious Quentin Quayne, detective. The chronicler of these cases is F. Britten Austin, and the new story will appear in an early issue.



"It is well, even for the average person, to include plenty of bulky food in the diet to prevent the bowels from becoming sluggish."
From "HOW TO LIVE" *by* Fisher and Fisk.

Health is your family's greatest treasure—Do you guard it well?

PLAIN, unadulterated carelessness, physicians all agree, is responsible for fully three-fourths of all human illness.

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When Betty brings a cold home from school, when father develops his bi-monthly fit of blues, somebody has been careless. Once those symptoms were the signal for castor oil or the box of pills. But an "Ounce of Prevention" is much better.

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And how much better than cure-alls and drugs is *prevention* in the form of a delicious food.

The intestines need bulk if they are to function properly and Post's Bran Flakes provide that bulk together with other important elements the body craves.

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How to judge tobacco

The true test lies inside the pipe—not in the pedigree, says Mr. Krob

In the following letter Mr. Krob points out that once we are past the infantile stage of "taking the watch apart to see what makes it run," we learn that true happiness is a matter of appreciation rather than of analysis. How do you feel about it?

Lorain, Ohio

Larus & Brother Company,
Richmond, Va.

Gentlemen:

Most people who are buying Better Light look up at the fixtures we install and say, "That's wonderful," when they should not even be interested in the fixtures. They should look down at their desk-top or counter or work-bench, where they actually use the light. They always want to consider it "F.O.B." the lighting fixture, instead of "Delivered" to the working plane, where it is to be utilized.

Personally, that's the way I look at tobacco. Many manufacturers go into detail telling us where their product is raised, how it is blended, how long it is aged and how well it is packed, and place this information before the public in their advertisements.

Why should we care whether tobacco is raised in the Sahara or on an iceberg, whether it is a blend of "57 Varieties" or run-of-the-mine, or whether it comes packed in cork or cast-iron containers? I buy my tobacco because of the way it tastes in the pipe. That's why I use Edgeworth.

Sincerely yours,

K. M. Krob



As the producers of Edgeworth we are of course vitally interested in its pedigree. We are absorbed in the blend of Edgeworth and in its curing—in every detail of its development.

But all our work and experiment and study has but *one object*—that Edgeworth may prove its worth "Delivered—Pipe."

And that's all we expect you to be interested in.

Let us send you free samples of Edgeworth so that you may put it to the one and only test that counts. If you like it, so much the better for us both. If you don't—well, that's *that!*

Write your name and address to Larus & Brother Company, 42 South 21st Street, Richmond, Va.

To Retail Tobacco Merchants: If your jobber cannot supply you with Edgeworth, Larus & Brother Company will gladly send you prepaid by parcel post a one- or two-dozen carton of any size of Edgeworth Plug Slice or Ready-Rubbed for the same price you would pay the jobber.

the door, "It's piratical, Mr. Hastings," she added quickly, "but I've got to go into that room."

"I beg of you—" Hastings advanced a restraining arm, but she pushed past him.

At the sound of Polly's name, Joan had glanced from one to the other. Polly! What did it all mean? As Beatrice had planned, curiosity became the dominant motive now. Joan forgot the timidity that had restrained her a moment before. She saw Hastings rush forward as Beatrice put her hand to the doorknob. "Madam, I insist—" But Beatrice had already opened the door and entered, Hastings still protesting. Quite calmly, gathering will from Beatrice's assurance and aware that only some reasonable motive on Beatrice's part could make this intrusion justifiable, Joan followed into the room.

(The conclusion of Mr. Gibbs' remarkable novel is dramatic in the extreme. Be sure to read it in the forthcoming October issue of The Red Book Magazine.)

THE BEAUTY PRIZE

(Continued from page 72)

then. The kid handed out the box with a grin.

"For Miss New York!" says he. "Slip it to her with my love, will you? And say, you aint so bad, yourself, kid!"

I was about to crack back at him when I remembered my apron, and shut my face and the door, as well. Then I took the box into my room and opened her up. Inside was the firm's card with something written on it: *"To Miss New York, with our compliments, wishing her success, and hoping she will wear this to Atlantic City."*

The dress was a dream—a light-brown chiffon street get-up that went wonderful with my hair. I held it as sacred as if it had been a altar cloth. Class! That's what it had, all over! And the very latest thing, being kind of Egyptian style, on account King Tut was still exerting his evil influence on ladies' clothes. With my fingers shaking so's I couldn't hardly undo the hooks, I put it on, and it fitted perfect. How had they known what to send? Then I realized. The paper had told how I was a perfect thirty-six. It had also given the size of my shoes and gloves, and I begun to wonder whether maybe they hadn't told on purpose. At any rate, I will say I looked good in the gown! It done something to my whole entire appearance. Remade it, as you might say, and I toned down my make-up quite a lot, for somehow a lot of lip-stick didn't suit it. Also I took the extreme twist out of my hair, and I was having a big time parading up and down in front of the long mirror in the drawing-room, practicing high-class gestures and methods of standing, when that doorbell rang again.

FOR some reason I couldn't help but hold back. Then the bell rung harder, and I could hear voices outside on the stoop. One look between the blinds showed me that four assorted men was standing waiting to be let in. What they was after, I hadn't nerve enough to imagine, but I couldn't hardly keep them there all day without its looking awful funny, and so I finally opened the door. The nearest one raised his hat with a smile.

"Good morning!" says he. "You are Miss Du Bois, are you not? I recognized you at once. We are from the press. May we come in?"

Well, there wasn't much to do except say yes.

"The maids are out," I murmured. "Please pardon the way I'm living."

I said it before I really thought. Right up to then I had intended to set all that society stuff straight, but there was something about the way I knew I looked in that new dress, and the manner he spoke to me in, that led me on like I was in a trance.

The boys came into my handsome drawing-room where Mrs. Langworthy had left pretty near everything natural, and they placed a chair for me, where I sat like a queen, while they gathered around waiting for my pearly words. But none came.

"Wont you please talk to us quite freely?" asked one nice-looking bird. "Just anything you care to say!" The position commenced to tickle me pretty near as much as it scared me.

"Ah, no, really!" I says. "I can't talk!"

"Then let us ask you a few questions," says the first bird. "You see, this business of a society-girl entering a beauty competition is real news. What was your motive?"

"Oh, deah!" I says. "Is it necessary to mention my social position? Cawn't we forget that?"

"Naturally you wouldn't care to have it played up in a vulgar manner," says a third reporter, "but we will be very careful how it's handled—you can depend on that!"

"Why, I went in merely foah amusement," I says. "I hope it wont be a boah!"

"Oh, I think you'll find it very good fun and quite an adventure," my first friend claimed. "What else?"

"Oh, I haven't a thing to say, really!" I says, afraid that if I said any more I would pronounce it wrong.

"Then perhaps you'll trust us with your story?" says Bright-eyes. "Let us write it up our own way?"

"Ah—gladly!" I says stifling a fake yawn with a refined hand. "And now if you gentlemen will pardon me? I am rawther busy today."

Well, it worked. They took the hint and beat it, leaving me all doubled up laughing until the horrid idea come to me that perhaps the Langworthys wouldn't see the joke. The more I thought of it, the surer I felt that they wouldn't. And inside of two minutes I was to the phone, calling up Eddie at the music store.

"For the love of tripe, come on up in a hurry!" I told him. "Have you seen the papers?"

"No," says he, "but I'll get one."

"I won," I says. "I'm Miss New York, but it's got me in a lot of trouble. Get here just as fast as you can!" Then I hung up, without explaining, for the doorbell was ringing again.

THIS time it was a yard of roses from a well-known firm, and two minutes after come candy from another. Then Slite and Company sent a evening wrap, a regular knockout, with a note plainly stating I was to advertise them in return. Well, that was jake with me, and the kind of thing a person might expect, but the real big excitement happened while I was anxiously looking out the door to see was Eddie anywhere in sight yet, and my heart give a bound of relief when a slim, snappy boy turned into the block. But pretty soon I seen it wasn't him, and I was about to go in when the feller stopped at my steps.

"Is Miss New York to be seen?" he says.

I gulped. "I am Miss New York," I says.

"Good!" says the feller. "May I have a few words with you?"

Well, my heart commenced beating pretty quick at that, because I thought, oh, heavens, maybe he is a plain-clothes cop come to pinch me for the bluff. But I had to jam on the brakes and smile.



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"Best in the Long Run"

"Surely," I says. "Wont you come in?"

He followed me, and took the seat I showed him in the parlor. I sat opposite and he coughed twice, and then suddenly reached for his hip. But although my heart nearly broke under the strain, it was not a warrant he got out, but a handkerchief. He wiped his hands on it, nervous, and finally come to the point.

"Miss Du Bois," he says, "I represent the Rickett Car Company, and I have come on a rather delicate errand. Of course, we realize that you undoubtedly have a Rolls, or something of that sort, and that our offer means nothing to you, in your position, but it means a great deal to us."

"Yes?" I says, pulling the yawn-stuff again, this time to hide my relief. He moved forward onto the extreme edge of the chair.

"The Rickett really is a very good car for the money," he said earnestly. "At eleven fifty, delivered, you can't expect too much of a sedan. But if you would do us the very great favor of accepting the use of one, with one of our drivers in uniform, of course, during this contest, you would be doing a great service to a young firm that truly deserves encouragement, Miss Du Bois."

I sat there just about stunned. A car for me—for me, that hadn't hardly ever been out in anything except a flivver, and generally walked to save carfare! And he was apologizing for its being only a Rickett! Can you imagine! I was struck so dumb he thought I was turning him down. He reached for his hat.

"Of course, if you don't care to lend a name like yours to such an enterprise," he says, "I understand. I hope you will pardon my intrusion."

"Oh, I'll be glad to oblige you!" I says hastily. "I—er—expect I shall have to put up with quite a few things of this sort. Send the car at two, and let the man wait until I'm ready."

Well, you would have thought I had give him Central Park, he was that grateful. And no sooner had he gone out than Eddie come in.

"If this aint the elephant's trunk!" says Eddie, looking around the room, his mouth hanging open. "How come you to be here, kid? Let's have the dirt before I choke with excitement!"

WELL, I told him then, about my caretaker job, and how I hadn't meant to fool nobody, but they had all taken for granted I was a deb, and wished it onto me, beginning with the night before when they had sent the limousine for only me, out of all the girls, undoubtedly on account of the street-number. And I told him about trying on the dress just when the reporters come and found me looking the part and all the rest, and as I told it, his eyes got sharper and brighter by the minute.

"And now I got to confess, before it goes any further!" I says. "This society lie is got to be straightened out, and I don't know how to commence. It's hurting my conscience a lot, and it don't do anybody a speck of good!"

"The hell it don't!" exploded Eddie. "Why, it does all the good in the world! It was probably them thinking you was a swell, won the prize for you in the first place. Didn't I tell you that you ought to have something extra beside your looks to win against all them Janes? And I said the truth! Being considered Miss Du Bois, the Langworthys' cousin, was what got you by, baby! The judges may not know it, but it's bound to of influenced them."

"Do you think they will throw me out of the contest if I tell?" I says. "Oh, Eddie, I'd hate to give it up now!"

"You aint going to give it up!" he shouted, pacing the room. "And you aint going to tell, either. Leave me inform you, Connie, that this stuff increases your chances at Atlantic City about one hundred per cent!"

"But why?" I says.

"Do you think for one minute," says Eddie, shaking his finger in my face, "that any of the stores will dare to offer you the kind of stuff they would send to a working-girl? Not by a darn sight! Say, kid, you'll have clothes that will put the rest of the dolls back where they wont even show!"

"That's true," I says thoughtfully, for it certainly sounded like sense. "But suppose the real Miss Du Bois shows up?"

"How do you know there's any such person?" says he. "The papers probably just took for granted you was related to the Langworthys. If they got any such folks, it's pretty sure to be in the social register. Aint there one around this house, some place?"

Well, we looked, and there was, but it had nothing about any Miss Du Bois that could possibly be their relative.

"You'll be down to Atlantic a week," says Eddie, "representing the most conspicuous city. You'll be the most socially prominent person, with the best clothes and the best publicity. And you'll go through with it if you got a grain of sense."

"But it aint honest," I says, getting feebler, however.

"Pooh!" says Eddie. "It's only a harmless bluff!"

"But the Langworthys—"

"The Langworthys are safe in Europe, aint they?" says Eddie. "They can't possibly get home before the show is over, and the chances are they wont ever know a thing about it. You can explain, after, if you find that you've got to. Don't be a dumblatz!"

"It's really a harmless fake," I says, half to myself, thinking of Pop, and the doctor's bill, and, also, being human enough, of the fun.

"Say, don't worry about the moral of it, baby!" says Eddie. "Nobody else will! Bluff! Aint I told you a thousand times that's the way to get by?"

He grabbed me around the waist and swung me a few steps, so's I couldn't help but cheer up, in spite of myself.

"All right, I'll do it!" I says, breathless, when he left me go.

"And if you win," says Eddie, suddenly serious, although still smiling, "which you are bound to, me and you is going to get married. We'll live in a swell hotel. No nasty housework for you, baby! We'll wear made-to-order diamonds and tear the world wide open!"

"Well—maybe!" I says, laughing, although something inside of me kind of chilled. "But just kindly remember, it aint happened yet! And meantime we better get back on the job—yes?"

"I guess no!" says Eddie. "I will, because I'm gonna furnish what little cash you'll need. But you got to cut Madame Estelle out from now on. I'll run in and shut the old cat up before I go back to the store. She's the only one can spill the beans."

"All right!" I says, giving in because he was so positive. "See you later, I suppose?"

"Yep!" says he. "I'll be right up after six." And then, fortunately before he could kiss me, the bell rung, and I managed to see him out and let in another present, at the same time.

Well, for a while it looked like Eddie had been dead right. Certainly all the presents I got was of the highest class. Also wearing them, for they was mostly clothes. I looked better than ever before in my whole entire life, and pretty soon the general excitement begun to get to me. Maybe it wasn't some sensation to have four motorcycle cops clear the way for my private car every time I went out! Not to speak of constant fresh flowers, a personal appearance at the Colossal Theater to open the big feature-picture of the month, two banquets and a ball in my honor, and my picture in the papers every day.

There was only one week between winning the local prize and setting off for Atlantic City for the great national event, but the week was so crowded, that among other things which I didn't do was writing to George. Of course we had fought, but I hadn't really expected it to be permanent. Deep in my heart I realized that if I was to write a few lines at the regular time, he'd answer by return mail. But I kept putting if off. It wasn't that I forgot him, on account he kept flashing into my mind at times when I would rather have forgot him entirely, his honest face seeming to stare at me reproachful from behind the round specs. Well, whenever I imagined this I would kind of shake it off, see, and plunge into the maddening whirl. And then, the very last day, when I was all dressed to start to Atlantic, my bags being in my car, and my hat on, who would show up but George himself!

I WAS standing in my favorite place at the parlor window, behind the closed shutters, and I could see him coming down the street, but of course he didn't see me. As quick as I recognized him, I got into a regular panic. There was no doubt in the world about what George would say once he got hold of me, and just then I felt like I couldn't stand hearing it. So I done a fool thing. Instead of waiting and having the whole business out face to face, I made a run for the car, jumped in and told the chauffeur to start. George was pretty near, by then, and the idea was, to pretend that I hadn't seen him coming. But of course I had, and one look at his face showed me he knew it, and that he knew that I knew. But it was too late to change things now. The cops had given the signal, and the little crowd around the steps give a cheer. Among them stood my old boy-friend, not a peep coming out of him, his face as white as a sheet; and as I drove off, I realized with a fierce clutch at my heart that this had been worse than any quarrel.

All the way down in the train, Eddie Schwartz, who had just got his two-weeks' vacation, kept chattering along about how I was to act, and stand, and talk, and how we was going to knock 'em silly and so on, until gradually he got me worked out of my grouch. After all, I figured a girl had a right to a career. Already I had two offers to go into moving-pictures in case I won, and the Rickett auto people had respectfully told me they would like to have me model at their head salesroom if I would consider the offer, at five thousand a year. Also in case I won, of course. And compared to doing your own housework on twenty-five hundred per, which was what George was magnificently drawing down, well, it was *la vie*, as the French say.

After we reached Atlantic, and the fun commenced, it was all I got a chance to think about, for the committee certainly showed us beauties a wonderful time. We had the best rooms in the big hotels, and one entertainment after another given for us. The contest, which was to last a week, was run the usual way, with the bathing-suit parade on Monday, the roller-chair parade, in afternoon costume, on Wednesday, and the dress-parade, where the elimination was to be made, was scheduled for Saturday night at the opera house.

"Kid, if the judges has any eyes," Eddie told me after giving the queens his personal inspection, "you've got a walk-away. There's one of them I want you to play up to strong—he's a well-known man-about-town—Eric Blandon. I hear he come down



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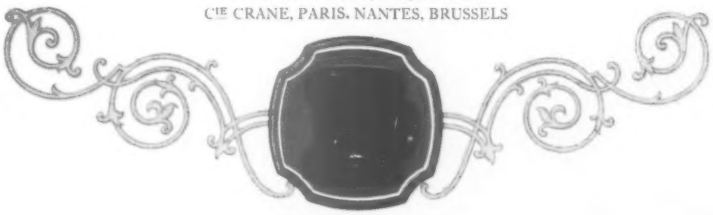
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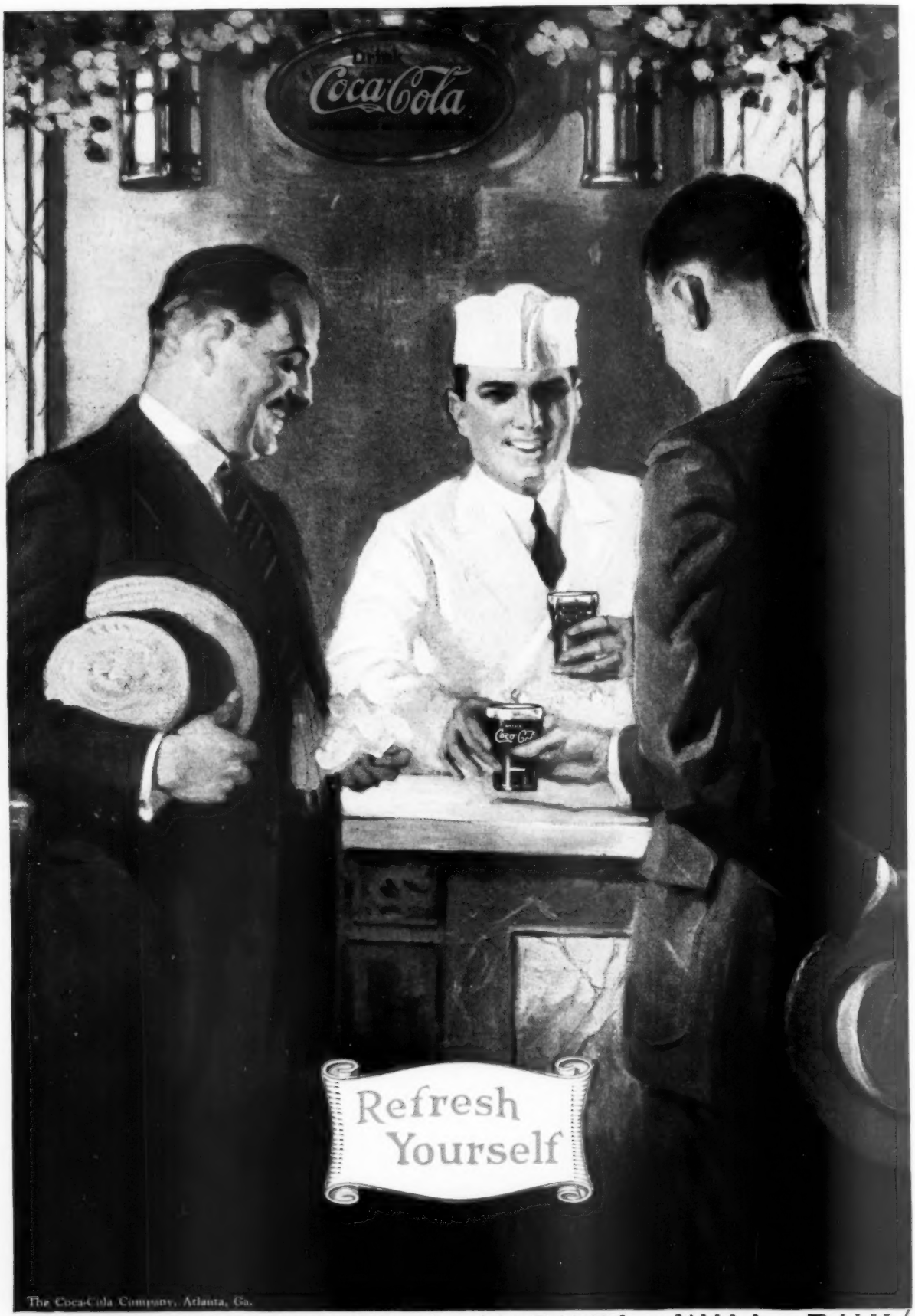
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Crane "Drainage Tee"



GOODNESS WHAT A NICKEL WILL BUY!

from Newport for this contest. They say he's got a lot of influence, and I want you to be sweet to him. I'll introduce you first chance I get."

"Well, I guess I can Boston my language sufficient to get by for a chat," I says. "Bring him along, Eddie, and I'll start vamping at his shoes and end up by putting his eye out."

But it wasn't until after the gorgeous wheel-chair parade that I got any chance to make good them sweet promises; and the very minute I was made acquainted with Mr. Blandon, I seen Eddie had pulled a boner. Of all the Johns on the judges' stand, this was the one baby I should of been steered clear of. He was no society nut, like I had expected, but a regular man in spite of his fancy white clothes, and he had a pair of blue eyes that looked at you out of a weather-browned face like they could see right through you.

"So glad to meet you, Miss Du Bois!" he says. "I've heard a lot about you lately, and have been hoping for this chance."

"Delighted, I'm suah!" I murmured. So far, all jerry!

"I'm a great friend of the Langworthys," he went on. "Old Tom and I have played a lot of polo together—on the international—but of course you know!" A cold spot commenced forming in the middle of where my stomach had been a few minutes ago, but I managed to pull a smile.

"They are in Europe this summer," I says. "Too bad, isn't it?"

"Why too bad?" he says with a funny little smile. "Because they are not here to see your triumphs?"

"Oh, no!" I says, confused and furious at myself for not knowing when to stop. "I only mean to say aint—isn't it a pity they are away so much?"

"Quite so!" he says, his eyes going through me like a gimlet. "Let's see, the Du Bois are Helen's family, are they not?"

"Yes, indeed!" I says, eager for safe ground.

"Funny, d'you know, I'd always thought she was a Drayton before her marriage," says he. "My stupid mistake, of course! Well, young lady, it has certainly been an interesting experience, meeting you! I'll have an eye on you in the finals, if I may. My word will perhaps have some slight effect with the other judges."

He made a little bow over my hand, and went off, still smiling. Hardly had he gone, when I grabbed Eddie by the arm.

"Eddie, I don't like that!" I gasped. "Slick as he was, it don't sound good to me! I can't decide if he's on, or not!"

"If you'd only learn to shut your trap at the right place," says Eddie, "you wouldn't put so much bait in it! Aint I told you a thousand times to stick to yes and no? But I don't see what's eating you, at that! Didn't you hear him say he was going to look out for you? What more d'you want?"

"He didn't say that," I told him. "He says he's going to keep an eye on me. Gawd only knows what he meant by it!"

IT worried me that day and the next, and right through all the jazz parties until Saturday night, when I was getting some into and partly out of the green-spangled evening costume I was wearing for the finals. It was so beautiful nobody could help but look nice in it, and once dressed, I felt a little better. But when I got my number and walked out on the stage amidst the roars of applause, the glare of lights and the music, well, my head felt like an electric fan in a beehive, and I couldn't hardly obey the directions they give me.

We beauties went across stage in a parade, first, then one at a time, all alone on the stage, and then the eliminations begun. I don't know did the committee string it out on purpose, for the public to get its money's worth, but to me, anyways, it seemed like a thousand years before the fight thinned down to me and Miss St. Louis. And another week appeared to pass before they sent her off, and I was selected for the final and last test. I had to appear against the last year's winner, Miss Golden.

Well, the girl was blonde and I was red, and when I seen her fatal classic beauty, so tall and handsome in a perfect peach of a white dress, with a red-white-and-blue sash signifying her position across the front of it, I thought: "Oh, well, I haven't a show. Who cares for a redhead alongside of a blonde in her class?" My heart was beating fit to burst my throat, and then just when I felt I couldn't stand the strain no longer, we was both sent from the stage at the same time! Eddie was waiting for me with a wrap, and he hustled me into my dressing-room.

"What's up?" he says excitedly. "Who won?"

"I dunno!" I gasped. "Get me a glass of water, will you? I feel like I'm going to faint!"

"Right away!" he says. "I'll be back in a sec."

With that he melted, and I sat holding tight to the edge of the dressing-table. In a minute there come a rap on the door, and thinking of course it was Eddie, I says, "Come in," without turning my head. Then a deep, refined voice spoke.

"I beg pardon," it says. "May I speak to you a moment?" I turned around, and there was Mr. Blandon, all quiet and at ease in perfectly elegant evening clothes.

"Oh!" I says. "Come right in, please."

"Miss Du Bois," he says quickly, "it is only fair to tell you at once that you have won."

"Oh!" I says feebly, all collapsed inside at the news, as if it had been a blow.

"But a rather delicate situation has arisen in connection with the award," he went on, his hard blue eyes fixed on mine, "and I have been delegated to talk to you frankly about it."

Again the cold spot come in my middle. What was he about to spring, anyways? My lips couldn't hardly form the question.

"Don't be alarmed," he says. "It isn't anything unpleasant. The case is simply this. Miss Golden, last year's winner, we have just found out, is desperately in need of money. She has had very hard luck the past year—she seems a simple sort of girl, with no background of any sort, and no special talent. Now, the idea is this: your people are awfully well-off, as I am in a position to know, and so of course the money means absolutely nothing to you. The committee wants to give Miss Golden the cash-prize, quietly on the side, and simply give you the medal and the title. Of course, I know you will accept the decision; one of our set could scarcely do otherwise. In point of fact, I've already told the committee I knew you would be glad to do it, but of course I wanted the formality of your consent."

Well, while he had been talking, something in my throat had gone awful dry. His eyes were never off me, and if he had come right out and said, "I know you are a fake and a liar," I couldn't of understood him any plainer. I was a outsider; I didn't belong; and nobody knew it any clearer than Mr. Eric Blandon, man-about-Mr. Langworthy's-town! And this was his way of punishing me. Well, since he put it up to me like I was a lady, I would show him that I could be just that, in spite of everything he thought. I got a hold on myself with the strongest effort I have ever made in my life, and when I rose up with a smile, and held out my hand, there wasn't a tremor to my voice nor to my manner, neither one.

"Thank you, Mr. Blandon," I says, looking him straight in the eyes, "thank you for giving me this opportunity to do the right thing. I shall be delighted to have Miss Golden given the money."

Well, I saw he hadn't expected that, for his whole expression changed, and for the first time he looked at me like I was a human being.

"Good girl!" he says softly. "Really, I'm awfully glad we met!"

Then in a minute more he was gone, leaving me with the world just about crumpled up under me, but with the necessity of at once going back on the stage to be crowned Miss America. Can you imagine!

IT was Eddie hustled me onto the stage, a moment later, with no time to talk. And somehow I received the beautiful cup, and give it back to its keepers, and they pinned the medal on me, and then at last, after I had got out a few words of thanks—I don't really know what I said—why, I found myself alone in a taxi with Eddie, headed for my hotel, and he was talking like one of the continuous electric phonographs in the music shop on Forty-second.

"Some hot finish!" he says. "All doggie, kid! All doggie! Didn't I always tell you it could be done? Maybe my advice wasn't good, eh? Take it from your old Uncle Eddie, he pays a hundred per cent! D'you know, I think we ought to grab off this publicity while it's going so strong, and get married on the Boardwalk tomorrow? Say, I didn't see them slip you the cash, though! Come on, don't hold out on me, feller; we're nearly married now! Hand her over!"

"Eddie," I says in a small kind of voice, "I aint got it."

"Well, when do you get it, then?" There was a impatient note in his voice.

"Oh, Eddie, I don't get it!" I says. "I couldn't take it—it wouldn't of been right." And I explained—or tried to, by telling him all about Mr. Blandon. Inside the taxi it was dark, so I couldn't see anything, but I could feel the storm coming even before it broke.

"The hell you say!" he burst out before I was through. "So you let them get away with that, you poor simp, you! Handed over that double grand like a nitwit! And where do I get off, I'd like to know? Me, that's invested thirty-five perfectly good dollars in this for you, backed you, coached you, put you in the winning class! And now you double-cross me like this! Why, it's as good as stealing from me! Aint you got no sense of honor?"

"That's just what I'm trying to get back!" I says. "My sense of honor! Oh, Eddie, I know it's a disappointment, but do please try and understand!"

"Understand! Oh, I understand all right!" he says. "I understand you're a crook that can't even play straight with your pal. I'm through; that's what. I quit right here. But I want my money back first."

"And you'll have it, too," I says, "if I die getting it for you. Thank heaven, I found out in time the kind of a guy you are!"

"And to think I nearly married you in advance of tonight!" says Eddie bitterly. "Now I got to go and explain to Joe Lipman that I can't buy that trombone in his orchestra that I got all arranged for. My Gawd, lookit the position you have put me in!"

I seen the position he had been in right along, pretty clear by this time, and when we parted about as friendly as a coupla wildcats at the hotel door, and I had beat it upstairs, I didn't care what happened—very much. You can figure it out for yourself.

Well, in my room was a yellow envelope



Your Daughter

How much of *her* life must be spent in filling oil lamps, scrubbing clothes and pumping water?

None.

For our generation has made a great contribution to human progress: it has transferred to electricity the burdensome work that women used to do. Your daughter entered the world at a fortunate time.

On many of the motors that make hard housework easy you find this monogram. It stands for General Electric Company, a nation-wide organization which produces apparatus and machines that have made electricity into a servant that works for all.

GENERAL ELECTRIC

School and Camp Information

The Red Book Magazine's Department of Education will help you solve the problem of finding a suitable school. We have personally investigated hundreds of schools and will gladly help you without charge if you are experiencing difficulty in making a selection.

Write stating age, previous education, religious affiliation, location of school desired, estimate of expense you care to incur. Enclose a stamped return envelope and address your letter personally to

The Director, Department of Education
THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE
33 West 42nd Street New York City

laying on the table, and with a sick feeling maybe Pa was dead, I picked it up and opened it. But it was from the Langworthys—a cable announcing they was sailing for home. The evening was growing cosy, to say the least.

Would the Langworthys send me to jail? That was the first thought come to me. And then I had a flock of 'em. I sat there and in the late quiet had a real showdown with myself. It wasn't exactly a gay time, neither. Here I had thrown away a perfectly good boy who I really loved, for a bum that turned me down the minute I tried to be decent. I was a fake, one of these impostors, like you read about in the papers. All this, and plenty smaller details, such as the affected ways I had been putting on, the way my head was swollen and so forth, I checked up pretty black on the debit side of my personal account book. Then I got a feeling of relief when I realized something. The credit side might be blank, so far, *but it didn't have to stay so!* All at once I realized where remorse was a silly waste of energy that could just as easy be used in making good. I could do it; I would. And the minute I decided this I shut a mental door with a bang on all that had happened. I would start new from this minute.

Well, any person knows how good that feels when you really mean it, and so, just as soon as I got back to New York, which I managed to without seeing Eddie again, the first thing I done was to hock my gold medal for fifty good American smackers, send Eddie what I owed him, and then take up with one of the three good business offers that had been made me.

THE first I went after was the picture offer from Goldringers, and while by now of course I didn't have no motorcycle cops or closed car, my picture was still in the paper, and no sooner had I sent in word that Miss America was there, than I was shown to Mr. Goldringer's office. I walked in perfectly confident. This bird was a keen duck, and had me sized up before I sat down.

"I heard," I says in my best manner, "that you wanted to talk about a contract in case I won, Mr. Goldringer. Well, here I am."

"Hum!" says he, looking at me thoughtfully. "Yes, indeed, Miss Du Bois. For the ad, see, I should like to look you over. I got plenty of stills of you already on the desk." There was something in his voice about as genuinely cordial as prohibition green mint!

"Yes?" I says, my heart thumping, but my mouth smiling pretty good. "I hope you like them?"

"Well, Miss Du Bois," says he, shoving his cigar calmly over to the other corner of his face, "I tell it to you frankly you aint a type to screen good. I am perfectly willing to sign you on for one picture at good money on account of your extreme social position. It's got enough advertising value to put over one feature, no matter how rotten you are."

There was goosemeat all over me by this time. But while the temptatior to lie was something awful, I was through with that stuff forever.

"Mr. Goldringer," I says, my throat working heavy, "that—that stuff about me being a swell is all a mistake. I aint any more related to the Langworthys than you are, and I'm sick of the bluff. I can't let it go any more. Couldn't you find me a job without that?" His big jaw dropped so he actually had to catch the cigar.

"So!" he says. "You was bluffing? Well, it's a pity, but in that case, I don't see as we can use you, young lady!"

And there was nothing to do but beat it out, feeling like a flat tire, but determined

NASH

Announces



The Advanced Six
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THE NEW *ADVANCED SIX* SERIES
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THE NASH MOTORS COMPANY, KENOSHA, WISCONSIN

Williams
Shaving Cream



Even the cap was designed for speed

If you like to make race track speed in the morning, Williams Hinge-Cap will appeal to you. Slippery fingers can't drop it. Carelessness can't lose it. For the cap's hinged on. It simply can't come off.

As for the shaving cream, it was designed especially for men with wiry beards and tender skins.

Williams works up into a rich, creamy lather almost instantly. And as the razor glides across your face you experience a new sensation. Each stroke is lubricated. Razor friction is removed. And when the shave is over, your face feels clean, cool and delightfully refreshed.

Try Williams tomorrow morning. Large size, 35c. Double size, 50c, containing almost twice as much cream.

THE J. B. WILLIAMS COMPANY
Glastonbury, Conn.

The J. B. Williams Co. (Canada) Ltd., St. Patrick St. Montreal



WE'VE scored again! *Aqua Velva* is the new product—a *scientific* preparation for use after shaving. For free trial bottle, write Dept. 69.

I wouldn't get anything more on false pretenses.

Well, it was the same at the other picture-company. And of course the Rickett people, that had been so eager, was off me as soon as they heard the truth. In five days I couldn't land a thing, although I tried every place I could think of. The idea of going back to Madame Estelle's was too much for me, even though I needed money badly by now, and I didn't know how to do anything except manicuring. By the finish of the week I was pretty near the end of my manila, and the Langworthys was almost due back. So with all of ten berries in my pocket, I turned over the keys of the house to a real, genuine, reliable janitress I had dug up, and bought a ticket for New Chester, Conn.

Why I ever picked on this little city is more than I can tell. It was very likely because I didn't know a soul in the place, but I had luck. Here I had no reason to keep up any society bluff, and inside of five hours after hitting the burg, I had landed the job of manicure in the barber-shop of the American Hotel. Thank heaven, Mr. Postello, who run it, didn't hold my fine clothes against me, like the women had at some of the other places where I tried for work.

WELL, it's a funny thing how soon a person can be forgot. If I had died, I couldn't of been left any flatter. The papers didn't have a word to say about me, and so it seemed like I was entirely dropped. New Chester wasn't any maddening whirl, but the room-rent was cheap, and while it was a nickel-slicing crowd that added a manicure to their shaves, still and all, I was able to send money home about the same as I had been doing, without letting Ma know how bad things was with me. If it hadn't been for the lonesomeness, and with getting crazier to see George by the minute, I would of got along pretty good.

I had written a coupla times, but both letters had come back marked "unclaimed, address not known," and I was too proud to write Ma to ask his mother where he was.

Also, when winter started to come in, finding me all fitted out for it with a swell set of chiffons and a classy bathing-suit, it was kinda depressing to a girl which had got used to the best and isn't able to get them for herself. Actually, there was times when the thought of the kind of heavy coat I would have to buy myself from some installment house made me shiver worse than the cold. And that is how late one October afternoon I come to speak to Mr. Will S. Treadman, the president of the local Rotary Club, about me being Miss America. I done it more to get a kick out of it myself, than to impress him. But he was hit by it, all right.

"You!" he says. "Why, yes, of course, I remember seeing your picture in the paper. How strange that I didn't recognize you before! Everybody was talking about you at the time."

"Yes," I says, wiping the soap and water off his nails, and beginning to polish vigorous. I may say that out in New Chester I was doing the job honest, in a good thorough way which lasted all week, easy. "Yes," I says, "funny how quick people forget, aint it?"

"But they don't, you know!" he says, a idea coming into his face. "If the papers spoke of you again, even after all these months, people would remember, just as I do. Perhaps you have heard that we are having a banquet tomorrow night in honor of the opening of our big new broadcasting station. Will you be our guest, and be the first to speak from it?"

Can you imagine! A little thrill run through me at his words. Here was a chance, maybe my last, to wear my swell green evening dress, to be the center of attention, to be somebody. I nodded my head. I didn't want to speak, because of being afraid of crying.

"Fine!" he says, all smiles and enthusiasm. "I'll send my car for you at six-thirty. Gee, this is a great ad for us! You're most kind to do it, Miss Du Bois."

"Oh, don't mention it, Mr. Treadman!"

Well, somehow when he went, my excitement went with him. Nothing seemed to matter a great deal, life being like it was. There aint much fun going to a party if your sweetie wont be at it, and no strange men made any hit with me those days. If I couldn't have George, I didn't want a new beau any more then I wanted a new right arm.

THE evening of the banquet I opened up the old traveler's home with loving hands and got out my green dress. When I was dressed in it, and had the thin wrap around me, I looked and felt better then I had in months. The confidence that good clothes gives to a woman! By the time I was in the banquet-hall, and the singing which this club always serves before its oysters had commenced, I was feeling almost like I used to in the old days down to Atlantic. But I didn't enjoy the meal, as far as eating was concerned, and any person which has been condemned to make an unaccustomed banquet speech, will know just exactly why.

Well, by the time Mr. Treadwell had got around to introducing me, the room was all a blur, and I felt like I was going to be shot, or something. But I managed to get up onto my feet, and face what looked like three tomato cans. Then I doubled up my voice and hit out.

"Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking," I says, "I am going to take this chance to tell a few of the girls who may be listening in, a word or two of advice about going in for beauty prizes. If you go in, girls, do it on the level in every way. We who enter for this kind of show, have a big responsibility, on account we set a standard of what shall be considered a typical American girl. And we ought to consider this fact carefully: we don't want the typical American girl should be thought of as too much overdressed or painted up. We want her to be thought of as refined, yet no fool; capable, but not pushing. We want the pictures of her that will be in the papers to show a girl that has a fine, handsome body because she has shown it proper respect and taken care of it, not a simpering sap eager to show off her shape in a vulgar way. In other words, before you go in for the contest next year, girls, be sure and think how you would like Miss America to look to some foreigner, and then try to be just that. And above all, if you win, don't get foolish over it. Don't put on any affected manners and let success get you to thinking the world owes you a expensive living just on account God gave you good looks. The beauty-show is just a show, after all, and if a girl lets it turn her head, it may cost her a good husband and home, and these is the only prizes worth winning."

Well, I sat down, then, and for a moment I was scared by the applause. Actually, I had got that interested in talking to them invisible girls all over the country, I had forgot that there was a big crowd of people in the room listening. And so Mr. Treadwell had to nudge my elbow twice before I realized he was speaking to me.

"Miss Du Bois!" he says. "Here is the young man who installed the station. He wants a word with you."

I come to life at that, I did, you know; and there actually was George, holding both his hands out, in the old way—

"My dear!" he says.

Can you imagine!

MAXWELL
Initiates a New Order
Says Walter P. Chrysler

The public in general probably has no adequate realization of the great advances which have recently been made in motor car engineering.

It is a fact that the good Maxwell, together with the Chrysler Six, has literally accomplished a revolution in motor car results.

If you have not familiarized yourself with the good Maxwell since Chrysler engineers began their work with it, you cannot begin to appreciate what it means to thorough satisfaction and economical, care-free motoring.

Its engineering design and its fine materials are directly responsible for the statements of owners that the good Maxwell now costs less to maintain than any car they have ever known.

When you ride in the good Maxwell, be prepared for a quietness and a smoothness that you probably never expected from a four-cylinder engine.

One reason why you don't feel any trace of vibration when you ride behind the Maxwell motor, is the fact that the reciprocating parts of the engine are balanced to the fraction of an ounce.

Another reason is a floating platform spring mounting under the front end of the motor—a wonderfully effective device which is exclusive to Maxwell.

Owners will tell you that gasoline economy generally averages 24 miles to the gallon.

With this economy is coupled performance that would be gratifying in a car of far greater cost and power.

You accelerate from 5 to 25 miles an hour in eight seconds, when you drive a good Maxwell.

Its engine, with displacement only a fraction over 185 cubic inches, develops power that will take you anywhere a car can go—and some places where some cars cannot go.

The car is a revelation in ease of steering. Its ease of riding is equally remarkable.

The spring suspension is one reason for this. The noticeable absence of motor vibration is another.

If you really want to know how far four-cylinder engineering practice has advanced—take a ride in the good Maxwell. Nothing else can give you a full realization of the new order of things which the good Maxwell has initiated.

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THE SHIP'S PIG

(Continued from page 83)

picked up, and that it might be days before they would reach an island.

"I ask," said Quinn, "what island ye intend steering for?"

The question brought a halt to the crunching jaws of the crew.

"The Solomons are our best hope."

"How far are we away from thim islands?"

"About two hundred miles."

"Ah, and sure if that's all yez have to offer us, I'm for shtickin' out here in the ocean and shtarving mesilf to death. It's not Thomas Quinn that's going to be et be the likes of thim. Aint there anny other place, now, ye might be takin' us?"

The Captain scratched his spotted head.

"There are the Queen Charlotte Islands," he said at last, "but they're five hundred miles away; we can't reach 'em, stocked as we are."

The crew looked away to where sea and sky met, and pondered. Gradually their eyes came back to the boat and spiked themselves on the black pig. Somehow their faces grew brighter and their jaws went to munching hardtack again.

Noon of the second day brought another meal of hardtack, a slender one, and next to the last. The pig had more than his share; the mate saw to that, and yet the pig was the least satisfied of them all. He scrambled under the thwarts squealing and grunting and sniffing at the sailors' bare legs. There were whisperings among the crew that the pig might take it into his head to ravish the boat and all that was in it. That evening they met in conference, forward.

Liverpool Harry was the whispering spokesman, and it was unanimously agreed that they'd kill the pig in the morning and eat him economically, and that the Captain be instructed to change the course of the boat and head her for the Queen Charlotte Islands, where a man's skin was at least safe from being parboiled. Then they lay down to their cramped rest feeling more cheerful than they had since they left the sinking *Cleecup*.

When daylight came, Quinn spoke up.

"Captain," he said, "there aint a damned wan of us going wit' ye to thim Solomon Islands. We're goin' to kill the pig, and ye'll be altherin' your course."

"Well," said the Captain, "it's easy to change the course after the pig is killed, but you must be temperate in eating him. Of course, it's as well to get him out of the way; I always did think that. It's a long ways to sail, however we go, and a pig aboard don't make it easier."

THERE was nothing in the monotonous danger of sea and wind to hinder the crew. Sheath-knives were pulled out of scabbards and sharpened on each other, and defiant glances sought out the mate, while ropes were being got ready. He sat in the stern nonchalantly, apparently untouched by the tragic portent of the preparations. But the empty pipe that he held between his teeth seemed carved of one piece with his jaws, so great was the pressure upon it.

"You'll be seein' the last av him this time, all right," said the irrepressible Quinn.

"I suppose so." The mate rose easily to his feet to peer at the pig. "But I sha'n't have bad luck from it—eh, Dan?" And he scratched the pig with his foot.

"Wot do you mean by bad luck?" asked the hairy sailor.

"Oh, nothin'. Only where I come from, even a hungry man wouldn't take life on Sunday."

The hairy sailor turned thoughtful, and his mood spread to the rest of the crew. Knives fell to their sides in nerveless hands, while their other hands went to their faces at the thought of a Sunday shave. Even a drowning man can be nice.

"Well, Dannie," said the mate cheerfully to the pig, "as long as they're goin' to kill you, let's see you do a trick or two before you die."

For once the pig seemed to realize values, and his response was prompt to the order to roll over, and he stood upon his hind feet as though there were a real raw potato to reward him. But when his jaws spread into his choicest smile and then closed upon the mate's pipe, a groan went up from those simple souls that watched him. They were spellbound, and even the jarring notes of the Captain's order to "stick him and be done with it" were lost upon them.

"Let 'im be till the 'ardtack's all gone," said Liverpool Harry.

"He's human; that's what he is," said Quinn, as they settled themselves to stare, for the rest of the day, into the dim vacancies of ocean.

THAT night the wind freshened, and when dawn came, the small sail was filled, and the boat was cutting the water swiftly. But every hope has its drawback. Something was wrong with the pig. He had moved forward, and was standing balanced in the bow, sniffing—posed like a statue of a pig carved in coal. It was only when the sun came up and the refraction had cleared from the horizon that the reason became plain: *the pig scented land!*

Moreover, there was a sight which caused every man to turn pale and his heart to beat like a kettle-drum. Out on the sea were two specks growing larger, taking the form of two war-canoes of Solomon Islanders, whose island lay like an alligator along the horizon.

There was no avoiding the war-canoes, and they took in their sail and prepared for whatever might be coming, as ignorant and brave men are wont to do. The pig alone maintained his composure, and continued to stand grunting in the bow.

"Look at him," said a sailor, "just look at him!"

Then he hastily fumbled beneath his clothes for a money-belt, and while the others watched silently, he took from it a large and shiny horse-chestnut, strung on a bright red cord, and going forward, hung it around the pig's neck.

"That's for luck," he said.

Instantly Romo followed suit, divesting himself of his rope-strung lobster claw and the silver medals of the saints. Another sailor followed with a string of blue beads. Then came watches of tin and sterling, companions honored as shipmates of many voyages, all ticking loudly. Still the pig stood.

"Get near him," they whispered to the mate. "Keep him that way. There might be a chance!"

When the native canoes reached the lifeboat of the *Cleecup*, their paddlers paused, then laid down their paddles, and knelt as the white men were kneeling with heads bowed to the figure of a jet black pig that stood proudly in the bow of their boat, guiding them to land. Then they boarded the boat and made respectful signs that it would honor them to be allowed to see her safe.

AS the sail rose again, the war-canoes lined up alongside, and a silent trip began. More and more hungrily did the pig sniff land, but whether from faintness or sagacity, he maintained the phenomenon of rigidity and silence to the end. The alligator on the horizon gradually acquired the trees



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and huts that proved its earthly origin, and the boats rounded a small neck of land and entered a lagoon.

"It all goes to prove," Quinn was whispering, "that a sailor's life is—" But the words stopped, for the most welcome sight in the world met his eyes: an English cutter, trim and capable, lay at anchor in the little harbor.

He finished later, however, when they were hoisting the pig aboard. Somehow the work of stripping off his ornaments was done too quickly, and Quinn's watch, thick and shiny and dented, made a straight dive to coral depths.

"It all goes to prove that a sailor's life is hell," said Quinn, peering after it. "That watch cost me five guineas!"

HOUSE TO LET

(Continued from page 61)

seen a caretaker; he knew absolutely nothing about caretakers, never before having inspected a house important enough to need the services of a caretaker. He had created his character of a caretaker entirely out of his own head, basing it upon his notions of what a caretaker ought to be like; and nobody had ever questioned the substantial truth of his ideal portrait. It would certainly be very interesting, amusing and just possibly helpful, to see what a real caretaker was in fact like. He rang the bell; after a considerable interval he rang again; the majestic front door opened to his summons.

"Are you the caretaker?" asked Sol.

"Yes."

IT was an old man, with whitish hair, a very wrinkled face, small watery eyes and thin gray hands; he was somewhat baggy and shabby and indistinct as to clothes, with a blue kerchief round his neck and a red one sticking out of his pocket. He spoke without the formula of respect usually offered to prospective tenants of important town mansions, but there was benevolence in his full tone; also he spoke contemplatively, as though answering not Sol Smith, but informing the whole universe.

"Got your order to view?" he asked. He took the card from Sol, and without glancing at it, transferred it to his own pocket. "We have got to be very particular," said he.

Being rather pleased with the old fellow, Sol Smith nodded amiably, if nonchalantly, sure of his power to impress and reassure real caretakers as he had a glimpse of himself in a large mirror on the wall of the vast entrance hall. What signs of prosperity in that slightly portly figure! The pearl tiepin alone— The vastness of the parqueted hall, however, was as much as he could stand up against; it was far larger than any room in his house at Clapham! The moldings on the panels of the various visible doors were gilded. The staircase was terrific!

"You know what happened to the man who was too particular?" observed Sol Smith quizzically.

"I know what happened to the man as wasn't," the caretaker replied. "Three doors away. Burglars came with a van and took off all the marble mantelpieces in the place! And the individual as came first to look round was wearing a pin on his chest with a pearl as big as a gooseberry. That's how they does it. But not me they couldn't do it on! Not me!"

Sol Smith felt a little uncomfortable, and the emptiness of the house gave him an uneasy sensation.

"Now, this is the dining-room." Opening the door to the right, the caretaker began to reel off the beauties of the house in the style of a museum guide. Then he suddenly stopped, while yet enumerating the advantages of the dining-room, and he looked Sol Smith up and down.

"Excuse me, but aren't you the great Sol Smith?"

"I am," Sol admitted, not deprecating the word "great."

"I thought you was. I thought you was. It struck me all of a heap." From his pocket he pulled the "order to view," already a seriously damaged piece of cardboard, and examined it. "Yes, that's right. You're Sol Smith, right enough. I thought you was. I said to myself as I was speaking, I said: 'Either that's Sol Smith, or it's the devil.'"

"Might be both," said Sol brightly.

"Excuse me, sir, but I should like to shake your hand. No offense."

A weak grasp; and as the caretaker waggled Sol's hand, he looked up naïvely into Sol's face. Sol was highly pleased by this encounter with one of his million admirers; it seemed to certify his position in the world, and he was glad that by so simple an act he could give such keen pleasure to a common mortal.

"Well, that's done," muttered the caretaker casually, and dropped Sol's hand as though he were letting something fall on the floor.

Sol began to think that he might have something to learn about real caretakers; they appeared to be more subtle and more mysterious than he had supposed.

But it was on the second floor, in the huge, imposing double drawing-room, that the caretaker revealed himself fully as a true character. Sol Smith had never seen such a spacious apartment in a private house. He tried to imagine himself giving a Sunday night party in it; and he could not, or hardly. He feared that he would feel a self-conscious fool in it, and he was quite sure that his stolid wife would.

"Ay!" said the real caretaker. "Well may yer look scared!"

"Scared? What do you mean, my good man?"

"Scared!" the caretaker repeated, grimly now. "Of course, I know as you music-hall swells make pots o' money. But what I say is—what d'ye do with it? Do you save it? No! I've had my eye on you swells for many a year, and when yer retire from the greasepaint and footlights, how many of ye is there as doesn't have to have a benefit to keep 'em out of the workhouse? Only one as I can remember, and I've had my eye on yer. Only one! What does a man like you want with a house like this? This house takes some keeping up, this house does. Lease seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years, and in three years *you* might be flat on yer beam-ends. Supposing yer had a stroke!"

THE great Sol Smith might have been flabbergasted had he been less great than he in fact was. He remained calm and massive.

"My friend," said he, pushing his hat to the back of his head, "do you make any charge for these sermons?"

"A silver collection at the door," the old man replied.

("Not a bad line, that!" Mr. Sol Smith reflected, wondering how he could best bring it into his sketch. "Not at all a bad line.")

"And should *you* know how to slang a butler?" the caretaker continued. "Why, a gent of your sort wouldn't dare to wipe his nose in front of a butler. You take my advice, Mr. Smith, and don't take this here

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house, nor no house round about here. Bloomsbury's more in your line. But Lowndes Street—I don't think!"

"You come out of an asylum, my man?" asked Sol Smith, assuming that he had to do with a lunatic.

"Not lately," said the caretaker. "But *you* ought to be in one if you're set on *this* house. If you're only wasting my time, that's all right. I've got lots of time. I've got all the time there is in the world. Like to see the next floor?"

SOL did not lack courage nor physical strength; and he was twenty years younger than the caretaker; so he bravely asserted that he would see the next floor. He saw the third, fourth and fifth floors, and then saw them all again in the reverse order. Back in the echoing hall once more, the caretaker, who had been silent down eighty-nine steps, remarked:

"Of course yer'd have to put house telephones in on every floor. Never keep modern servants with all them floors unless ye have telephones to save 'em a-running up and a-running down. See what I mean?"

"Yes, I see," Sol agreed blandly. "What I don't see is how you keep your job as a caretaker."

"Oh, well," said the caretaker, "don't you go and let worrying about that spoil yer show tonight, Mr. Smith."

"And the basement?" Sol suggested.

"Eh, I'm not forgetting the basement. You come down along o' me and mind the steps. They're dark, and they're hard on yer spine if ye slip."

The basement seemed endless to Sol Smith, and full of marvels. The wine-cellar! The strong-room for plate! The butler's pantry! The butler's bedroom!

"And there's something here," said the caretaker, "as yer wouldn't find in another house in Lowndes Street, and that's a servants' bathroom. When yer ring for yer butler and he doesn't come, ye'll know he's having his bath with verbena bath-salts."

The servants' bathroom was a daylightless cubicle beyond the scullery. The hot-water heater was in the scullery, and in the dividing wall was a little hole with a shutter like a theater-gallery ticket-office, through which the occupant of the bathroom, by means of his bare arm, could manipulate the heater in the scullery.

"A bit dark here," said Sol Smith in the bathroom.

"Yes, and it'll get darker soon," said the caretaker, slamming the door and locking it from the outside.

"Here!" cried Sol, who was a prisoner.

"Here and there!" retorted the caretaker, and his face showed itself to Sol on the scullery side of the little aperture. "So you're the man as libels and slanders us caretakers." He grinned fiercely at Sol. "I've seen yer sketch, all right. I know all about it. We pinch things, we caretakers, do us? We bully young women, do us? We blackmail people, do us? We accept of bribes, do us? We lock people up in rooms, do us, and take money to let 'em out again, do us? All that's in your sketch. Here caretaking's my trade, and as honest as many, and more honest than most; and yer make yer blooming living by holding us up to shame and scorn twice every night. What d'yer think ye are? A man? Yes; and speaking of locking people up in rooms, well, us *do* lock people up in rooms—bathrooms, as it happens. And so now ye know it!"

The real caretaker walked deliberately away, and Sol could hear his heavy, slow footsteps resounding through the kitchen and the passages.

"Here!" cried Sol again.

No answer. Not a sound!

An impossible situation! The victim of it was obliged to admit that in his sketch he had drawn a much truer character of a caretaker than he suspected. In fact, the reality surpassed his wildest notions of it.

He struck a match and peered at his watch. In half an hour he would be due at the Victoria Empire. At this point he lost his head and began to thump and kick. But in and out of his resentful fury ran the tiny thought that there might be some justice in the caretaker's complaint. He had traduced the great race of caretakers! And herein was the explanation of the queer, dangerous old man's supposed madness.

HOWEVER, therein was *not* the explanation of the queer, dangerous old man's supposed madness. For, after what seemed to be an interminable interval, during which Sol had burnt his last match in consulting his watch, and was obliged to hold it at arm's-length through the aperture to take advantage of the scullery light, the caretaker returned, and having snatched the watch and chain out of Sol's startled hand, uttered these memorable words:

"And there's one more thing, mister! You've insulted *my* granddaughter."

"Insulted your granddaughter! I've never set eyes on her!"

"Yes, you have. A nice remark to pass to a respectable young woman—telling her that getting her lines out of her's like drawing teeth out of a cow. And on top o' that, yer give her notice."

Sol Smith caught his breath as a blinding illumination came upon him.

"Are—are—you the great Macdoodle?"

For answer the caretaker pulled off a wig.

"Here! Take your watch, Mr. Smith," said he in a new, dignified voice, ceasing to act.

"This is a crime!" exclaimed Sol.

"You may call it that."

"I shall put the law on you—shutting me up like this!"

"If I were you, I shouldn't, Mr. Smith. Because if you do, it will all come out what I did it for, and everybody'll know that you bully young women, and what sort of language you use to them. You wouldn't care for that. And here is my granddaughter come to see why you're staying here so late. It seems you told pretty well everybody where you were going today!"

Nella Nora had followed her ancestor into the scullery. She positively exuded pertness.

"Do let him out, Grandad," she laughed. "He'll be late."

"Well, I will, to please you, my dear, and so that the public sha'n't be disappointed. It's the public I always think of first. But he must apologize. . . . . See how nice and kind and forgiving she is!" he added to Sol Smith. "And you'll withdraw the notice you gave her, wont you? I'm sure you will."

Behind Nella there appeared a very fat, slatternly woman, the real caretaker this time. The old comedian gave her a ten-shilling note. And Sol Smith, having been set free, gave her another ten-shilling note. And then Sol Smith burst into laughter, long and free.

"May I ask you what you are laughing at, Mr. Smith?"

"Myself," replied Sol Smith, when he had recovered his composure. "And may I add one thing? You *are* the great Macdoodle—you've proved it."

They shook hands. Sol took Nella Nora swiftly off in a taxi to the Victoria Empire.

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THE FIRST ASSISTANT BURGLAR

(Continued from page 94)

"Oh, I know what that kind does! She'd never let up on it—not as long as she lived!"

"But what on earth can we do?" Young Mayor Bainbridge was lost at sea, with not a sail in sight. Margaret faced him, a determined pressure showing at the corners of her lips.

"Give her just what we've led her to expect—platinum watch, silver, diamond pendant and all!"

"We can't do that!"

"Can't we? Can't we?"

"But your mother—and your friends?"

"You just watch your own friends, Theodore," said Margaret icily. "Mine know how to keep their mouths shut. . . . . When does that letter say she's coming?"

"Tuesday afternoon. She'll stay that night, and for the wedding the next day, then leave immediately, she said."

"Thank goodness for that." Then, in spite of the fact that Margaret knew to the minute that the wedding was only six days off, she counted deliberately on her fingers. "Today's Friday. Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday—I can't count Tuesday, because she'll be here. Well, we'll have to keep her at the house and see that she doesn't get away from us; that's all there is to that. Now run along and telegraph her that we'll be delighted. Just delighted," she added. "And please let's don't talk about it any longer. I've got so many things to do, I—I—"

WHEREUPON her hand began making motions toward her hair, and Theodore, being versed in a few things at least, moved on down the street, a perturbed, worried man wondering who it was that ever said marriages were made in heaven. As for Margaret, she merely traveled in circles for a long time, then as suddenly sat down to think.

"Let me see," she queried, pressing a finger against her lips, while the Shrimp gazed up at her in bat-eyed curiosity. "I can keep away from showing her the trousseau things—and fix it with Evangeline to mention how wonderful they are—just enough to give her an idea. And Mother's giving me all the linen that Aunt Gracie left—goodness knows, that's exquisite enough for anybody! There wont be a chance for her really to go see the house; everybody'll be so busy. I'll just show her that snapshot casually. It looks a lot bigger in that—with those two automobiles that happened to be standing in front of it. Then—then—" She remained thoughtful, her brows wrinkled, one small hand pounding deliberately into an open palm. "Well, Mr. Mace will simply have to do it; that's all there is to that! Goodness knows, Father was kind enough to *him!*"

Five minutes later Margaret's mother came home, and Margaret followed her upstairs. There was a conference, broken by many gasps and expostulations. But it ended as all such conferences end these days—with Mrs. Lannington sitting limply in her rocking-chair, staring blankly at the wall and wondering what on earth this newer generation was coming to, while Margaret rushed forth to do two days' work in one. The following morning was destined to be a total loss as far as wedding preparations were concerned. Margaret was starting at seven o'clock for St. Louis.

In fact, she started at six-forty-five, leaving His Majesty howling at the front window as the motorcar whizzed down the street, shied around the corner by the Tri-State Manufacturing Company, then roared along upon the St. Louis road, with the speed-laws somewhat the worse for wear. At eight-ten she swung through Forest Park, and lost a traffic cop in the maze of trees. At eight-forty-five, she sat in the office of Mace and Company, jewelers to the ultra of St. Louis, a very determined young woman, arguing fiercely with the head of the firm.

It was a matter of more than an hour, in which the white-haired Mr. Mace strove to talk loftily of greater things than mere monetary possessions, higher ideals than those of striving to outdo some one else, and other thoughts of the same nature. Then suddenly he wilted. Margaret had dabbed her handkerchief at her eyes.

"I—I never thought you'd treat Ed Lannington's daughter like this," she said.

After that, it was easier going. Finally Mr. Mace rose and nervously rubbed his hands.

"There's only one thing about it, Margaret," he announced in final effort. "I'm responsible to the stockholders of this firm. I can't simply let things go out of here without protection. You'll have to sign for them and be responsible for them. And be careful! My goodness, child, be careful!"

Miss Margaret Lannington smiled. The world was hers again.

"I've thought that all over, Mr. Mace. Of course, you've heard of the famous Mr. Barker?"

"You mean the private detective that put up such a terrific battle against those bank-thieves?"

"Even to being shot in the arm," said Margaret proudly. "I guess nothing will get away from him!"

Mr. Mace, of Mace and Company, breathed easier.

"Of course, if you've taken that precaution, Margaret. You've seen him?"

"No, but I've telephoned the firm where he works. They'll let me have him, they said. I'm going over there now to make the arrangements."

AFTER that they went into the little room with the plush covers on the table, and Mr. Mace called for a certain box out of the jewel-vault. That afternoon Margaret Lannington returned home, tired, wondering a little what Theodore would say when he found out that she was spending a hundred and fifty dollars for detective hire—then dropped the subject. She had a right, she guessed, to spend her own money. And life went back to its usual abnormal condition, with the Shrimp in the kitchen, Norah edging through the door and jamming her foot at him as she did so, the bag and the bone and the ball still hanging untouched on the cellar door, Theodore dropping by, hurrying away, then dropping by again, telephone calls from Uncle Herbert to know whether his trousers should be light gray or dark gray, bridesmaids swooping in to take up time with inconsequential affairs, then hurrying away again to announce to their friends that never again would they put themselves out to see that anybody got properly married. The fever heat increased for everyone, except a lonely brown-and-white Boston bulldog.

The time came when Margaret and her mother remained awake most of the night, even forgetful of the fact that His Majesty the Shrimp lay in the middle of the guest-bed, snoring his loudest. There were too many other things to consider—the packing of trunks with everything possible that could be tucked away forty-eight hours before the journey, the spreading of wedding presents on tables in the upper spare room, with the waste of two hours and a half in concealing the fact that there was a surplus of six gravy-boats, fifteen sets of salt-and-pepper shakers, three water-jugs and a half-dozen extra fruit-dishes and what-nots, so

The reading of this page will teach you the care of your gums and may prevent your toothbrush from ever "showing pink."



Soft food robs the gums of stimulation.

Hasty eating cheats the gums of exercise.

Do we kill our teeth and gums by kindness?

IS THE TROUBLE with our teeth and gums that we are too kind to them? Yes, if you think it is kindness to save them from work.

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How soft food causes "pink toothbrush"

Most of the trouble starts with the food we eat. It is soft; it does not stimulate the gums as it should. Often we eat too quickly, again depriving gums of stimulation. Our gums grow soft and flabby. "Pink toothbrush" appears—the forerunner of those troubles of the gums which are increasing at such an alarming rate.

With this condition to face, it is not remarkable that people are coming to understand that ordinary methods of cleaning or scouring are inadequate. Properly to care for your teeth, you must also care for your gums. You need a preparation that stimulates the gums as well as one that cleans your teeth.

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promptly soothed by bandaging with cooling, healing
Mentholatum
Write for free sample
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that the donors would see only that which each had given. In the midst of this, Margaret paused, a belligerent light in her eyes, and cheeks aflame.

"Humph!" she exclaimed. "I thought so!"

"What is it, dear?" Mrs. Lannington had looked up from the problem of two beautifully horrible casseroles which simply wouldn't match with anything else. Margaret returned to her labors.

"Oh, nothing!" she said. However, it was just the opposite. No present had come from Aunt America!

But even that thought vanished, in the task of trying to figure out how to make Grace Wilkins believe that a bilious yellow piece of china would look well with an old-rose table set. The hours sped by, while the Shrimp snored on, and while far up the street, a gray-green man, in his stocking-feet, wabbled slowly the length of his room and back again, one arm plastered at his side, attempting at the same time to keep his eye on a chalk-line and upon the printed page of a heavy book which proclaimed:

"At a few paces behind the clergyman, follows the groom, who in turn is followed by the best man. The groom stops at the foot of the chancel steps, and takes his place at the right, as indicated in the accompanying diagram."

Whereupon the gray-green man looked for the accompanying diagram, found it to be a photographic illustration of how the table should be set for a wedding-breakfast, turned to the addenda section at the back of the book, discovered that the photograph on Page No. 117 should be on Page 248 and that the diagram on Page 248 should be on Page 117. Whereupon he sighed heavily, smoked a third cigarette above his daily quota, stubbed his toe against the rocking-chair and wearily began all over.

But there is an ending to everything, even to the night before the day before a wedding. About the time that young Mr. Bainbridge threw the etiquette-book at the ceiling and forgot to turn off the lights when he went to bed, Margaret gave a final sigh and laid what felt strangely like a ton of lead on the pillow, for all of five hours' sleep. By the time she had finished a ten o'clock breakfast, there was a ring at the bell.

IT was a stocky man with a round red face, surmounted by a pair of heavy eyebrows and a derby hat. He had square shoulders, this man, from which his clothing rounded off a husky form, with a policeman-like bulge at the right hip, tight trousers and shoes which bulged upward from the toes, as if to give plenty of room for walking. He carried a grip and an air of mysterious importance. It was the famous Mr. Barker, the detective.

"Right on time, ma'am," he said as he stepped inside, glanced about the living-room, swung an appraising eye toward the windows, felt the catch of the door with a backhanded movement, then looked toward the dining-room aperture in which was framed His Majesty. "Humph, got a dog, eh? Nice doggie. Nice doggie! Does he bite, ma'am?"

His Majesty answered the question himself by frolicking forward and licking at the ears of the famous Mr. Barker, as that person bent to pet him. It had been eons since anyone had paid attention to His Majesty. Here was a right nice fellow! He continued his welcome until Mr. Barker nice-doggied him into something of quiet, and again addressed Margaret.

"Well, here I am, ma'am, ready for service."

"Yes, I notice. I'm very glad—that you're here on time." Now that she had a detective, Margaret wasn't quite sure what to do with him. "Have you any plan?"

"Sure. Have the rocks gotten here yet? You know—the jewelry?"

"No. Mr. Mace is to bring them up this morning. And—and remember,"—Margaret raised a warning finger,—"you're to know nothing about them, except that they're presents."

"I'm the original guy that don't see nothing, don't hear nothing, don't say nothing, when my clients' interests are at stake. Now, you asked me about a plan. Well,"—and he eyed his suitcase,—"the usual thing is to buttle."

"To which?"

"Buttle—buttle! Answer the doorbell and just be the butteler. I've brought my butteler's outfit along with me."

"Oh!" Margaret beamed. This was something more than she had figured, and a vision of Aunt America rose before her. "To be the butler? Of course! Then you can watch everybody."

"I've buttled some mighty big cases," said Mr. Barker. "Now, what's your plans?"

"Well—" Margaret concentrated, with a finger against her lips. "The presents will arrive at about eleven o'clock. Then this afternoon I intend to have tea for my bridesmaids; and then tonight there'll be the rehearsal. Of course, that will be the real time for you to watch the house, because nobody will be here. It's to be a church wedding, you know, and we'll all be rehearsing from about eight until ten-thirty."

"I see." Mr. Barker fingered his derby. "Then there don't seem to be much for me to do until later in the morning. Maybe I'd better drop downtown and telephone the chief and tell him I'm here."

"There's a phone in the house if you—"

"Me an' the chief usually talk from booths," said Mr. Barker; then stooping again to pet the grateful Shrimp, he took his departure. Half an hour later he returned, to receive from Mr. Mace various packages and jewel-cases. Then, in an upstairs room, he changed to his "butteling" outfit, and the guard was on, while in the center of a small table in the gift-room there reposed a splendid thing of scintillating gems, radiating its glory upon another affair of gorgeousness—the pendant and the wrist-watch, while rich silver glimmered near by. Now and then a gray-haired woman passed the door and sighed—Margaret's mother. Margaret herself was too busy, even for a second glance. In a few more hours Aunt America would be here, and there were yet a dozen persons who must be counted upon to keep a secret.

Noon came and went—one o'clock, two. Theodore went down to meet the three-twelve. Then he telephoned, anxiously. He had seen no one who might look like Aunt America. Margaret sighed with exasperation. Just like her to miss the train, or send a wire that she was coming at some ungodly hour of the night or— Then an old-rose limousine with a chauffeur at the wheel rolled up to the curbing, and a round little woman, walking in sprightly fashion in spite of her evident three-score years, moved up the steps and faced the buttling Mr. Barker. There came an announcement:

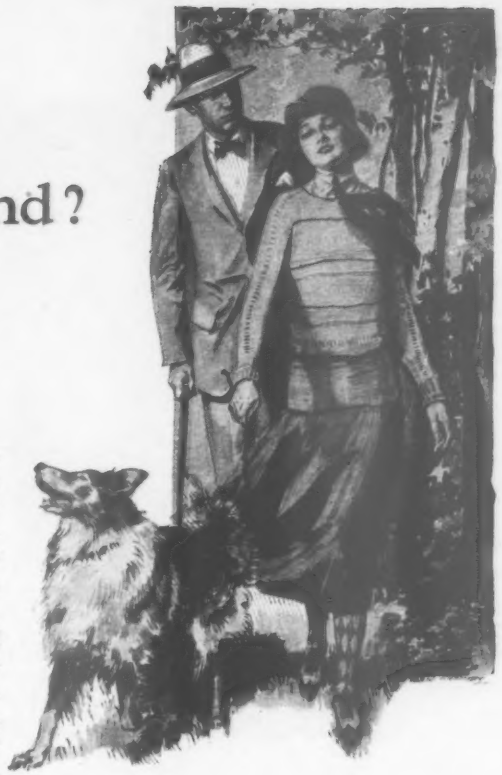
"Miss America Bainbridge."

IT was Aunt America—blue-eyed, sparkling-eyed, with a queer little perk to her glance and an air of taking in everything at once; Aunt America in a "boyish cut" suit, sheer flesh-colored hose, a *cloche* turban—and, if the aghast Margaret wasn't mistaken, her gray hair bobbed. More, there had been no error. Aunt America took off her hat, ran a carefully manicured hand through her short curls and kissed Margaret almost with the same action.

"Well, dear," she said, "I got here. The roads were terrible, though. What's the matter—didn't you expect me?"

Are you keeping pace with your husband?

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CORRECT, vital facts about feminine hygiene are given in detail in the free booklet which will be gladly sent you. You will appreciate the complete information and directions which it gives for the many personal and other uses of "Lysol" Disinfectant. Mail the coupon for your copy.

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*On page 12 of the book "Good Teeth", Keep Well Series No. 13, issued by the U. S. Public Health Service, is the emphatic statement: "grit is too hard for continuous use".

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"Why—yes—but I thought you were coming on the train."

"Not as long as I've got that concrete-mixer out there," said Aunt America. "I suppose I should have told that nephew of mine, but I simply didn't think of it. Nobody ever rides on trains any more. Where is he, anyway—that nephew, I mean? And where's your mother? Theodore told me you had a mother. Anxious to meet her. We guardians, you know! Nice home, dear," she rattled on. "The kind of a place I like—neat but not gaudy. And so you and Theodore are going to be married!"

"Why—yes—we thought so—she's upstairs; be down in a minute; he's on the way here; we like it," said Margaret in a flustered manner. Aunt America was coming a bit too fast for her. In fact, there was beginning to filter through Margaret's mind the fear that somewhere there had been a horrible mistake—also that if this were not Aunt America, Margaret would like her. But there was no chance to follow that train of thought. Aunt America was asking more questions.

"It's to be a church wedding, eh?" she queried as she walked about the room, then hurried forward to meet Mrs. Lannington. "Well, being an old maid myself, I'm not qualified to judge—but if I were doing it, I'd take my future husband by the nape of the neck, drag him to a justice of the peace and call it a day. And I understand that foolish boy has bought you a ton of diamonds or something of the kind."

"Y-yes—something of the kind."

"Have to take a look at them. I'm a bit of a judge of diamonds. By the way, is there a good hotel here? I'll want to put my chauffeur up—but then," she added on second thought, "I might as well keep him here. I'll want to take a sail around town and look at that dovecote you two are to live in. Where is it? Up the street? Somebody said it was up the street."

"Somebody?" Margaret went pale. Aunt America evidently had been making inquiries even before she struck the house.

"Yes. Thought I might as well save you the bother. Must be quite a place. Foolish boy, Theodore, to go spending his money on big houses. Big houses mean big bills. What was it he paid for it—fifty thousand?"

"Fifty thousand?" gasped Mrs. Lannington.

"Mother," broke in Margaret in rippling haste, "don't you think you'd better go call up the girls and ask them to be here at five sharp?"

Mother did. Then while the buttling Mr. Barker moved austerely about in the background, giving Aunt America the "show-up" appraisal for possible marks of past criminal record, Margaret Lannington subsided weakly in a chair, strove to answer a dozen more questions and wished for Theodore. At last he came, and Aunt America told him again that he was a foolish boy. Then while Margaret fought in vain for excuses, she moved for the door.

"Now just forget I'm here," she said. "Aunt America can take care of herself, even if she is sixty-four. Had to do it all my life, being the old maid that I am. You said the house was up the street. I'll take a look at it—never mind, no directions. I'll ask somebody."

"And ask them the price, too!" groaned Margaret inwardly.

THEN she disappeared, while Theodore stared at Margaret, and Margaret stared at Theodore. Then she shunted him out of the house, simply because he reminded her of Aunt America. Better the imagined person of the lace cap and the bobbing cameo and congress shoes than this aged dynamo. Margaret pictured her up at the house, poking her head over the windowsills to glance within at the wall-paper and estimate its

price by the roll. Then she pushed the vision out of her mind, and hoped for the best. Seemingly it happened. When tea-time came and Aunt America breezed in again, it was with no hint of discoveries. In fact, she did little more than repeat that Theodore was a foolish boy, when she looked at the wedding presents, admitting at the same time that he certainly had a taste for jewelry.

Then she seemed to fade farther and farther into the background, and things went more amiably—even dinner, at which Aunt America beamed every time that the buttling Mr. Barker served from the right, and complimented them upon having such a faithful servant, once he had left the room. She even went out in the kitchen and fondled the Shrimp, arousing that dog personage to a seventh heaven of delight. Things were progressing much better for His Majesty. He even looked at his grain-sack and barked a plea for a romp in the yard. But hurried calls interrupted. It was time for rehearsal. Five minutes later, the Shrimp sat in lonely longing. Norah was gone, sneaking out the back way, that she might ease in at the side door of the church. Theodore had departed. Uncle Herbert and Mrs. Lannington and Margaret and all the rest of them had left.

Only the butteler remained, sitting stolidly in the front room, smoking a pipe. The Shrimp ambled in to him.

"Nice doggie," said the famous Mr. Barker. Then under his breath: "Damn good thing for you, you don't bite." Following which he drew the shades and looked at his watch.

"Half-hour to wait. He'll be here right on the dot."

SO he smoked awhile more, then played with the Shrimp, whereupon His Majesty danced toward the kitchen, returned, danced again and for a third time, until at last Mr. Barker followed. The detective grinned.

"Thanks for the tip, purp," he said. "That's better'n a suitcase. Less conspicuous. Ought've thought of that myself. Thanks again. Nope—we wont play with that. Better use for it."

Whereupon he rolled His Majesty over and over on the floor, at last to draw up in an attitude of sharp attention. A motor-car, carefully throttled, had come to the curb. A moment later a thin-faced man, nervous, hands twitching excitedly, had entered the door, disregarded the Shrimp entirely, and moved toward Mr. Barker.

"Let's make it snappy," he urged. "Where's the stuff?"

"Upstairs." Then as the other man started away, Mr. Barker caught him by a sleeve. "Now, nix on the hurry. That's what almost got us in trouble on that bank deal—you being in such a rush, I had to pull that shot on myself. We'd have been in swell if anybody'd ever stopped to figure out how those powder-burns got on my sleeve. Take it easy. Got all the time in the world."

"Yes, but I've got to make a get-away."

"All right. Don't I give a wrong description of the car? And don't I hear it moving away in the opposite direction to the one you take before I lose consciousness? Listen," added Mr. Barker austerely, "this is my last job. We've got to make it a clean one. I'm retiring after this."

"So'm I. Well,"—and the thin man fidgeted anew,—"what's the line-up? How about that dog?"

"All right. But he might start barking when we begin moving around. Now, the game's just this: Over go the chairs—big struggle. Blood here and there on stuff, and on the stairway and upon the bum gifts we scatter on the floor. What'd you bring to take it away in?"

"The swag? Nothing. You've got that grip, aint you?"

"Yes, but it aint big enough. Got a bet-



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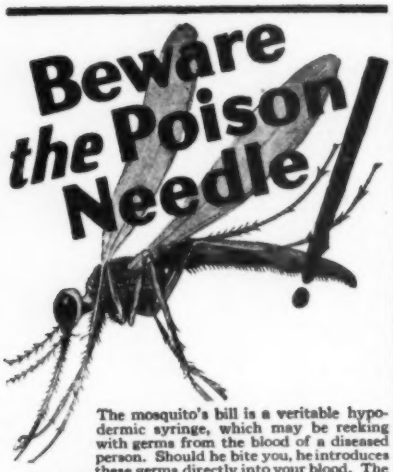
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ter scheme, anyway. Grain-sack out here. You know the rest, don't you?"

"The clip on the head? Sure. —Hey!" The thin man turned anxiously to where the Shrimp was dancing about in expectancy of play as the two men moved in rehearsal. "Nix on that stuff, dog!"

"Put him out, Jake; he'll trot down the street. The maid tells me all he wants is a chance to run away. I'll be cutting my hand and getting the claret started."

Jake went to the door, and His Majesty bounded outward. This was another surprise and pleasure. The Shrimp almost didn't understand it for a minute, and stood undecided, blinking in the darkness, as from within came the sound of sudden scuffling, persons moving about, furniture being overturned, and steps on flooring from which rugs had been displaced. At last, the night calling to him, he moved down the yard, thence to the sidewalk—then halted. An automobile—standing right in front of the house! Therefore it must belong to some one who belonged to the Lanningtons. His Majesty nosed the wheels, then climbed to the running-board, whining with sudden pleasure. The tonneau door stood open—for a purpose far different from that of receiving joy-riding dogs. But of that Lord Kilkenning knew nothing. So he climbed within, took his position on the back seat, forelegs against the rear panel, and waited for the thing to start.

DOWN at the church Margaret Lannington sat upon the rostrum watching the wabbling form of Theodore as he came forth according to directions, allowed him to progress to the chancel and then told him it wouldn't do. Over at one side Aunt America, lorgnette to her eyes, leaned toward Mrs. Lannington and asked why all young people were unutterably foolish. In the rear of the church the procession formed anew, and each, repeating "Left—left—" under his breath as the organ swung into the wedding-march, proceeded to come forward thoroughly out of step. The rehearsal was on in earnest—while within the Lannington home a different sort of rehearsal was gone through for the last time, to be followed by the performance itself, and then a hasty movement as a thin man seized a crammed grain-sack and leaned to a survey of a bleeding companion rolling on the floor.

"Why didn't you knock my head off?" asked the injured Mr. Barker. "You nearly murdered me."

"What'd you want, a love-tap?" asked Jake. "You're all right. Give me a half-hour. Then stall for another hour with 'em—before you can tell 'em anything. I'll be on the cut-off by then."

"Beat it!" was Mr. Barker's only answer, and Jake swung the heavily laden sack to his back and rushed for the door. Once outside, he stood a moment in shadowy survey, listening for sounds on the quiet street. There were none. He hurried out to the car, shoved the sack of loot into the tonneau, and then, oblivious of the movement of tiny, scrambling feet on the rear seat as the machine started, swung around the corner and headed for out of town—while in the rear, a dog among dogs once more, His Majesty the Shrimp bobbed about on his bounding seat and panted with pleasure. Motorcars, it seemed, were built for dogs.

Again and again, at the church, the procession whispered "Left—left—" and stepped right, right. Or the organ played the march so slowly that everyone moved down the aisle like a group of undertakers, or so swiftly that Aunt America asked Mrs. Lannington if it really were Mr. Mendelssohn who invented jazz. Or the flower-girls tripped on the worn piece of carpeting just at the end of the pews, or Uncle Herbert forgot what he was there for, and was asking the sexton how many the church would hold when he should have been giving the rehearsal bride away. Worse and worse it all became, as rehearsals will do. Then better and better, only that it might grow worse again, after which—

Came the marshal!

Bursting through the doors, arms upraised and nightstick banging against the pews, his brown derby slanted over his eyes, and his mouth struggling inaudibly for words! Through ushers and best man, bridegroom and bridesmaids, Uncle Herbert and flower-girls, he burst, at last to reach the rostrum, there to wave his stick at Margaret Lannington and gasp it all at once:

"The house! Robbed. Just telephoned me! All them weddin' presents!"

"House—presents?" Margaret rose before she sank again. "But there's a detective!"

"Knocked out—hole in his head! I said knocked out—"

But Margaret didn't hear. She was very still and white, in the arms of an equally white Mr. Bainbridge, while Uncle Herbert ran to the faucet in the vestry-room and yelled for somebody to find the water. Then everybody moved for the door, ganged there, decided it must be a mistake, moved back again, then rushed forth once more, while Theodore carried Margaret's hat into the street, looked at it, dropped it and went back for what he thought he had in the beginning, which was Margaret. After that they all went to the house.

MR. BARKER was just reeling from the telephone, whence he had crawled inch by inch to relay the terrible news. At the sight of incomers, he fainted—for a full fifteen minutes, until a physician arrived. Then brokenly, heartbrokenly, in fact, since this affected his reputation, he began in slow sections to tell the story.

While far away, streaming along a country road, an automobile swerved and bumped, and jolted at a sixty-mile-an-hour speed—too fast for a small dog to maintain himself upon the rear seat in comfort! The Shrimp whined faintly. He moved for the third time to the end of the seat, that he might steady himself there for a jump to the floor. He bent, putting forth one white paw appraisingly. Then suddenly he stiffened with delight. He'd smelled something!

Something with a familiar smell, like a grain-sack! And like a rubber bone—and a gutta-percha ball! This time he didn't hesitate. A straight leap, and he was on the floor of the car. An instant later Jake, at the wheel, turned his head slightly. Had he gone daft, or was that a dog growling?

He wasn't daft. It came again—accompanied by a strange rattling, and sudden sounds of activity from the rear. A thrill of fear shot through the thin heart of Jake the robber. Ghosts? But there it came again—then something rose and bumped him in the back of the head, only to tinkle to the floor again as the grain-sack was shifted suddenly about, its end loosened, and wedding presents began to bob into the open. Jake swerved.

"You there!" he ordered, and reached a hand backward to catch at the sack. "Leggo of that, whatever you are!" He fumbled, turning that he might take a swift glance at the road, and lessening his speed slightly. "Leggo—leggo that. Hear me? Leggo!"

He had grasped the sack and pulled. Which was just what His Majesty the Shrimp had longed for! His Lordship set his legs and growled. Then he jerked in return. A mighty jerk, followed by a second and a third, while in the front seat a thin man, suddenly terrorized, struggled for equilibrium—for his hand had become twisted in the end of the sack. Harder and harder he struggled to free it; his foot swung suddenly clear of the accelerator—then he shrieked with fright as the machine struck

a rut in the road, swerved wide, galloped across a ditch and headed for the wide open spaces where an automobile could turn over as it pleased.

BUT back in Kenwood they only knew what Mr. Barker had told them. And he had told it plentifully. Here and there through the house mournful persons moved in funereal silence, or stood in little groups about the famous Mr. Barker, while the marshal took notes and wondered just what he'd better do. Out on the veranda young Mr. Bainbridge stood apart from the madding throng, and chattered. It had just come to him that the bill down at Mace's would come to something like $9,762.50, while up in a disheveled room, where cheap wedding-presents littered the floor and expensive ones were conspicuously absent, a white-faced girl stood in gaunt survey of a former splendor, her lips trembling, white hands pressed against her breast.

The door opened. A round little woman with sparkling eyes and an eternally cheery manner entered, to come quite close, then to gather the girl tight to her with chubby arms.

"There, there, dear!" she whispered. "Jewelry's only jewelry. I've had lots of it in my life—but it hasn't brought me much. There—there—they didn't take the main jewel. Nobody can rob you of that."

The lips quivered more than ever. Then as suddenly the outburst came. Almost without realizing it, Margaret was weeping whole-heartedly in the arms of Aunt America, and telling her everything—even to the truth of that piece in the paper. On—on went the story—then the telephone rang.

And rang, and rang, before anyone thought to answer! Then from downstairs came strange noises, shouts. The sound of scuffling, as though a number of persons were trying to catch somebody who wanted to be somewhere else. At last Theodore's voice, high, excited:

"Margaret! Margaret! Get on the extension! Listen—the Shrimp got him! And we've got Barker—"

It was an involuntary action. As involuntarily she listened to the fag end of the sheriff's story from fifty miles away—

"I've got this dog here too. Hold him, huh, until you come for him? This bird, the one that confessed, says the pup yanked him off the road some way—couldn't explain it very well. Pretty bunged up from the machine turning over. . . . . What? . . . . No, the burglar. The darned dog was playing with the sack that the loot was in, scatterin' stuff all over the field, when I happened to come along and seen that overturned car. Got a deputy still lookin' with a flash-lamp—"

"But the diamonds—the diamonds!" Margaret had cut in. "Did you find the diamonds? And the wrist-watch?"

"Yep, we found them all right—"

Margaret Lannington turned weakly from the telephone, allowing the receiver to dangle unhooked.

"Well—at least," she gasped, "they recovered Mr. Mace's diamonds."

But Aunt America had come close again; once more those chubby, lovable arms were around Margaret.

"*Your* diamonds, dear!" she said. Then, while the girl gasped: "I knew all the time, honey. A nosey, lonely old maid, you see—who so wanted two deserving children to mother. Never try to fool one of them, dear. They'll read between the lines in spite of you, then sail out and ask a million questions until they find out what they want to know. Just an old maid's trick, dear—that's all. But I knew why you did it. Just because I *was* nosey. I knew—and I didn't blame you." Then she hugged Margaret again. "So I sent Mr. Mace a check for those little things, this afternoon."

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M A Z U R K A

(Continued from page 77)

"Why didn't he say so?" demanded the policeman. "Nothin' wrong with that. I was detailed to have a look. They's so many games goin' on to get the young girls away from home, that this sounded like another. I'll tell the lieutenant." The crestfallen policeman let himself out.

A reporter called the following day. But he was an amiable young man, and was quick to see that his assignment was a soap-bubble.

HE took himself off—and Sonia Wieniawski took herself in. Neither Miss Challoner nor Mallory heard her enter. They stood behind the piano, discussing the advent of the reporter. So the newcomer remained by the door, waiting to be observed.

She was not beautiful; she was scarcely pretty. Seen upon the street, she would not have invited a second glance. But for all that, her face was fine. There are some faces that are direct mirrors of emotion; and Sonia's was such. Let a beautiful thought enter her mind, and her face became beautiful. Her complexion seemed to be dead white, but inspection discovered it to be of the palest olive. Her hair was jet black and done in an old-fashioned way that gave you the height and width of her brow. Her eyes were large, blue-gray, and set well apart. There was no peasant blood here. Seen across the room, there was but one bit of color—her scarlet lips, now held tightly against her teeth.

She was dressed in black, but this did not disguise her young and shapely body. Her hat was a nondescript sort of bonnet, as colorless as her dress.

Mallory turned and saw her, with more indifference than he usually accorded an unknown woman. As a matter of fact, he saw in her the type that was now beginning to bore him inexpressibly, for all that his pity was still undulled.

"I beg your pardon," he said, coming forward. "You have come in answer to the advertisement?"

Sonia nodded. The thing she feared was not in this room: so a door in her heart opened, letting forth the natural gayety. For a moment her face became beautiful. She approached the piano and sat down, striking a few chords and running a scale or two. Then, with her gaze directed toward a patch of blue sky beyond the window at her right, she began the tender, dreamy "Mazurka in A Minor"—Chopin's.

Mallory had put himself into his chair loosely, his elbows on the arms, the good hand over the useless. Miss Challoner watched him closely. Presently she saw him sit up and lean forward, his face no longer dulled by apathy. Indeed, his expression was one of complete astonishment.

"Play that over again," he said.

"The mood is gone," Sonia replied. "I should not play it well."

Her voice was sweet and her accent charming. She spoke slowly, is if her native tongue lay in ambush and she feared it.

"Very well, then," said Mallory, with understanding. "Play whatever comes into your mind."

Miss Challoner sighed. Spring had entered into the studio. Oh, well she knew the signs.

Sonia sat for a moment with her hands folded in her lap. Suddenly the room became filled with the majesty of Brahms' "Rhapsody in E Flat." Then Liszt's transcription of the spinning song from "The Flying Dutchman," and the "Butterfly Etude" and "Second Nocturne"—Chopin. The riot of color that bedecked the walls, the Oriental rugs on the floor, the thin, handsome face of the man who, she knew, would never harm her, had drawn her to her great countryman. When the last exquisite cascade of notes died away, she did not turn to Mallory for his approval.

He really wanted to praise her, but a sudden shyness blocked the impulse. This girl had the genius of interpretation; there was soul as well as intellect in her performance. And of all things—that mazurka, his favorite of the Chopin mazurkas!

Mallory walked over to the piano. "Can you come Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at this hour?"

"Yes."

"What is your name?"

"Sonia Wieniawski."

"You are Polish?"

"Yes."

"I'll try to explain. I used to play for my own amusement, but an injury has made that impossible. Miss Challoner will always be here when you come."

"Then you will want me?"

"Yes. Will thirty dollars the week be satisfactory?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Give me your address, to save you unnecessary steps, should I be called away from the studio."

"I will not mind that—steps. And if I do not appear some afternoon, it will be because I cannot come." She rose from the piano seat.

"Where did you study?" he asked.

"Cracow and Leipzig."

"You speak English very well."

She did not reply, and it came into his mind that her uncommunicativeness was set. Something warned him that if he pressed her for address and history, he would never see her again.

"WHAT do you think of her?" Mallory asked, as later he and Miss Challoner drank tea.

"Wonderful! She really ought to be in concert."

"You have never heard of her before?"

"Never; and I don't believe anyone else has."

"I am still rather dazed. I don't know how she did it, but she played the very things my mood demanded."

"Spring," said Miss Challoner.

Mallory laughed. "I know exactly what's in your mind. You are going to marry this girl to me, and we're going to be happy ever after. Rot!"

"Haven't you ever felt the spring?"

"Not beyond the annual cold." Mallory rose, brushing the cake-crumbs from his clothes.

"Supposing some afternoon I find it impossible to come?"

"Then I'll dismiss the girl. I shall never be alone with her for a minute. You may lay to that."

But an amazing phenomenon took place the moment he returned to his studio. He found himself alone with Sonia: for to think of another is to be with that other. He had to admit that he was excited, intrigued. That mazurka—he had played it a thousand times! And she had given it a new accent. He got his hat and coat and went out for a long walk in the fading daylight.

Lonely; he was lonely, terribly lonely. Perhaps he had made an ass of himself over his hand. But he knew that he would not make an ass of himself over this strange Polish girl.

MALLORY'S sister did not know what to think. The girl mystified her. With her woman's eye, accentuated by sisterly alarm, she had tried to find flaws in the Polish girl who spoke but little, but who played beautifully. Peasant or aristocrat, she could not discover. Genius was a great refiner.

There was nothing against the girl, save her unknown background. Mrs. Carnovan liked the pleasant and dignified manner by which she refused a cup of tea and went her way. Still, she had a notion to get rid of the girl by exciting her brother's interest in another direction.

"Geordie, she is really an artist. There's something wrong. She ought to be on the concert stage. Why not use your influence?"

"I've got that in mind," Mallory replied. "You see, Puss, there are lots of men and women who play beautifully, but cannot face an audience. This girl may be one of those unfortunates. So one of these days I'll fill the studio and see how she carries on."

His sister sighed relievedly. But Miss Challoner smiled; she knew all about spring.

So the little drama rolled on to its objective. April merged into May; and spring began to take active part in the affairs of men. Spring reënergizes earth and mankind and Mallory began to look forward eagerly. If Sonia did not appear on the hour—as sometimes she did not—he paced the studio and wondered if she had been hurt. But this wonder was unspoken.

To Mallory, Sonia's face began to grow beautiful, as a sketch grows beautiful when painted in. His usually keen eyes did not note, however (as Miss Challoner's did), that twice Sonia had entered the studio with a suspicious redness around her eyes.

His canvas grew; and Miss Challoner watched it with kindly envy. Fortunate young man, never to have had this gift bludgeoned by necessity!

It was still spring; but she now began to doubt. She had never intercepted any glances between the girl and Mallory. The girl still refused to step outside her employment. Always when the impromptu concert was done, Sonia went her way. And never any visible effort on Mallory's part to find out where Sonia lived or what her history was. In all, twelve visits; and the boy had not yet taken Sonia's hand in his, to welcome her when she came and to speed her when she departed. Miss Challoner had been expecting words, when only sounds sufficed. What more exquisite dialogue in the world than that of a woman playing music to a lonely man?

IT began to rain that afternoon, and when Sonia came in, she was wearing a dilapidated rain-coat which had not offered much protection. Today Mallory sprang forward

O'MALLEY

He was a cop, was O'Malley; and intending to break him, they stationed him at the junction of five streets at the corner of a school yard. But instead of that breaking O'Malley, it was the making of him. Gerald Beaumont wrote the story for an early issue, and that's what he properly calls it: "THE MAKING OF O'MALLEY".

as he noted that she was having some difficulty in extricating her arm from a sleeve.

"No, no!" she cried. "It's all right. I can get it off."

But with a laugh he caught the offending sleeve and gave it a vigorous yank. It was not possible for Sonia to grow paler than she was; but her lips lost color, her eyes closed, and she swayed slightly.

"What is it?" Mallory asked. "Are you hurt?"

There was something in his voice that renewed Miss Challoner's faith in spring.

"It is nothing," Sonia protested, "nothing."

"If you do not feel well—"

"I will play to you," she interrupted. She smiled; but the color was not yet returned to her lips.

"Rest awhile, anyhow," he insisted.

"I have only the hour."

Restless to be gone, thought Miss Challoner. What had happened?

Sonia brushed past Mallory to the piano and began to play. Mallory did not understand women, but he did understand music, every nuance; and it came to him, with a queer thrill, that Sonia was telling him something that she dared not utter vocally. There was a tragic note in everything she played; even Miss Challoner recognized this fact.

Sonia was telling him that she was grateful for his kindness, for the fact that he had never tried to approach her in equality, and for giving her this contented hour in which her soul went among the clouds as aforetime—told him that she was in a hell which was tightening about her day by day, and said good-by!

Her dress was invariably the same—black, never an extra ribbon. And yet she loved color; this love emanated from her as perfume from a flower, subtly, the moment she touched the piano-keys.

Today Mallory did not dream in his chair, but leaned with his elbows on his knees, watching the white sure fingers—beautiful hands. Sonia was between him and the light. He saw a blue shadow on her left forearm, or what he believed was a shadow; but presently he discovered that it moved with the arm. It was a bruise.

AS usual she never glanced in his direction. Her gaze was set upon the keys or upon the sky beyond the window. Today, however, her gaze frequently swerved to the vase of roses standing upon the piano-top, beyond the music-rest.

What a memory the girl had, he thought. All these compositions without a note to refer to, and never falter. He himself knew something about this gift and the labor to round it out. Nevertheless, it was something always to marvel over.

The hour drew to its end. Sonia arose. She arose in dim wonder that she had gone through this hour without faltering, that the pain of her body had not broken through the strength of her will.

Mallory plucked the roses from the vase. "Take these home with you," he said.

"For me?" Her astonishment broke down the wall of her reserve. Pleasure flowed into her eyes, her mouth; she was for the moment beautiful.

"I'll get a box for you. Where did you learn to speak English so well?"

"My mother was English," said Sonia, clasping the flowers in her arms.

"Who did that—the bruise, there?"

Sonia looked down at her forearm; and the walls rose up about her again.

"A crowded car," she lied. "Thank you for the roses. They are so beautiful."

"Friday I'm having a few friends in to tea. I have written out a program, and I wonder if you'd mind playing it?"

"Let me see it, for I shall have to practice," she responded, knowing full well that

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today she was leaving this pleasant atmosphere forever.

So then, thought Mallory, it wasn't stage-fright, the curse of many a talented performer! Somewhere she had faced audiences. The mystery surrounding her was only intensified.

"You confuse me as much as this girl does," declared Miss Challoner, after Sonia was gone.

"What do you mean by that?"

"Haven't you any curiosity?"

"Oh, I have my share. If I quizzed her directly, she might never return."

"Would that matter?"

Mallory laughed. "It would. If she disappeared now, without me knowing anything about her, she'd haunt me till the end of my days."

"Did you notice her face when you gave her the roses?"

"Yes. I suppose you've still got that bug—wanting me to marry her?" He laughed again, amused. He took her quizzing as raillery out of friendship of long standing.

"Have you never been in love?"

He thought this going a little too far. "I believe I can honestly say no to that. I may have seen a mirage. Anyhow, Sonia wears no ring."

"That signifies nothing these cynical days. But what was the matter when you pulled the sleeve of her rain-coat? I thought she was going to faint."

Mallory frowned. "I believe she's been manhandled."

"I'm sure of it. She comes in here as one would enter the City of Refuge. And each time she leaves the neighborhood in the company of a man I shouldn't care to be left alone with in the dark."

"How did you find that out?"

"I'm curious. A friend of mine lives opposite, and I set her to watch."

"What does he look like?" Mallory was visibly excited.

"Tall, lumbering, middle-aged, a scraggly beard like that of men who never shave—an unkempt creature. And Sonia is clean. Not possibly her father. He would have made himself known. Married? It might be that."

Suddenly Mallory's honesty stepped out of its mental hiding. The girl had caught his interest from the start, and this had gone on compounding with each visit. There was no love-nonsense in this interest: the searchlight of introspection revealed nothing beyond a friendly attitude. If ever he loved, it would be some one of his kind. A Pole whose antecedents he knew nothing about: it wasn't to be thought of. Music was well enough; but George Mallory's wife would have to possess distinctions.

He knew that shortly he would know all about her; but there was no need of telling Miss Challoner that he had set a private detective upon Sonia's trail.

THE detective arrived that night, while Mallory was at dinner. Mallory had not expected to see him so soon.

"Take a chair and draw up," he said. What was he going to hear?

"I believe I have about all you want to know," began the detective. "Her name is Sonia Wieniawski, all right. From nine until one each night she plays the piano in a dance-hall which, through some political influence, has escaped raiding."

"A dance-hall?"

"Low, too. But she might be on a desert island, for all the notice she gives the gangsters."

"How far is it from where she lives?"

"About four blocks. On her way home, no one molests her, for a very good reason. Her uncle takes her home."

"What kind of a man is he?"

The detective fiddled with a spoon for a moment. "Queer thing, there. But I'll

come to that as I go on with my report. I went to the girl one night, during intermission, and bluffed some facts out of her. Her uncle was out of the way. Well, her father was first violin in Cracow; her mother was the daughter of an English clergyman. Runaway match, I imagine. The mother died when Sonia was about fourteen; the father died two years ago."

MALLORY got out his pipe. Over in the corner there, he saw Sonia's face above the roses.

"Her father's brother came to New York years ago. The brothers wrote occasionally. When her father died, the girl decided to come to America, where fortunes lay about in gutters. Her uncle told her to come. She had never seen this uncle. I guess the girl was pretty good at the piano—she told me she made her début in Cracow. But almost immediately upon her arrival here, she mysteriously lost the documents in the case, the clippings, her letters of introduction, her program. She was without corroboration, without money, without influence—well, this is New York, Mr. Mallory."

"Go on."

"She told me that her uncle had hunted the agencies up and down, without success. Now, none of the well-known agencies had ever heard of Sonia Wieniawski."

"You mean that this uncle never really approached the agencies?"

"That's about the size of it."

"But I don't understand. The girl is a great musician."

"You'll understand presently. This Sonia is straight, clean-cut; but this is a strange land. She doesn't know the ropes, and is helpless. I've run across this stuff often; but this Sonia is strong. I had to threaten her with the law before I could get these facts."

"Something crooked in the background, do you think?"

"I'm darned sure there is. I'd never seen Joseph Wieniawski before, but I didn't cotton to him, not for a cent. He's dirty inside and out. He gets her a job in a dance-hall, where the men are gunmen, dopes or cadets. I'm not sure, but it's my opinion he sent her here because you are a rich man." The detective paused to let this sink in.

It did sink in. Mallory now understood why Sonia had been so close-lipped. Her uncle, flesh and blood; and in her pride she had refused to betray him.

"I have never been on the regular force, but I've got friends there; and I brought one along with me one night to get a line on Wieniawski. The man was instantly identified as Nikolai Muraviev."

"Not her uncle?"

"Wait a minute. Muraviev did time at Sing Sing for white-slaving."

"Good God!"

"We went through his trunk. There were papers identifying him as Wieniawski, her father's letters and—her missing documents. He may be the girl's uncle; he may have gone to prison under an alias. There's nothing on him now; so there it hangs. Joseph was never naturalized. Now, my opinion is, he's not going to waste the girl. Big money, and you're the mark. If she were under age, we could step in; but she's twenty-four, and we have no authority. She came into the country with five hundred and a good passport."

"I'm much obliged to you."

"The skunk beats her."

"What?" cried Mallory, half out of his chair. "He beats her?"

"So the neighbors say." The detective laid a slip of paper on the table. "Here's the addresses—the house and the dance-hall. I think your influence can straighten the matter."

"It shall," said Mallory grimly.

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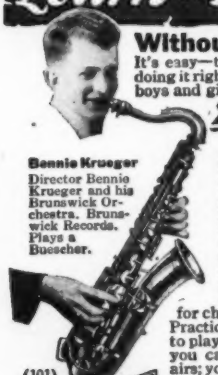
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AFTER the detective was gone, Mallory resurrected an old fishing-suit, a cap to match, and wore them forth into the night. He hadn't the least notion what he was going to do; he was conscious of little besides a boiling rage which a long walk did not serve to cool. One phase became clear: Sonia had not told her uncle that she had not been alone with him in the studio. . . . . The damned filthy hound! Men like that in this world! His purpose formed suddenly, and he knew precisely what he intended doing.

He found the dance-hall, a low-ceilinged loft, poorly ventilated and redolent of Turkish tobacco and cheap perfume. Silly young girls, with knowing airs, and slope-shouldered young men, with dull eyes, rotated across the floor, their combined gestures similar to those of the dancing Negroids of the jungles. At the far end of the hall was a small stage, and upon this sat the musicians, four in number: a saxophone, a violin, drums and a piano. The smoke partially obscured Sonia's face; but oddly enough, his imagination filled out the nebulous: the scarlet mouth and the blue-gray eyes that always reminded him of the sea in a morning fog that was permeated by sunshine.

Mazurka! Sonia, playing jazz to this riffraff, her soul tortured by the ugly sounds! He felt, bubbling up within him, that same furious force which had driven him berserker in battle. He lusted to kill; and had he seen the uncle near by, he would have set upon the man.

But bewilderment quickly shouldered his fury to a second level. Sonia—what was she to him that he should stand on the threshold of this evil-smelling place, lusting to kill the man who called himself Sonia's uncle? The damnable injustice being meted out to her: maybe that had something to do with his present mood.

Intermission came. The men in the orchestra stepped down from the stage and mingled with the crowd; but Sonia remained at the piano, a slender figure in basalt and marble. Several young toughs sat on the stage rim and tried to start a conversation, but without success. They were baiting her. There was a roaring in Mallory's ears; but he held himself in. A row would merely transport him to some hospital; and Sonia would vanish out of his orbit forever.

The crowd by the side door, presumably leading into some refreshment room, eddied. A tall man was plowing his way through. He crossed the waxed floor to the stage, mounted it, and began to talk to Sonia. Instantly Mallory knew that this would be the uncle.

Mallory turned and went down into the street, sensing bitterly his impotence. It was not quite ten; three hours must pass before the dance-hall closed. So he tramped about the streets for a taxicab; in this he rode around town for three hours.

WIENIAWSKI opened the door of the flat and pushed Sonia rudely inside. He shut the door without locking it, so violent was his temper. He had been drinking, and his piggish eyes were swollen and bloodshot.

"So! You lie to me, eh?"

Sonia did not answer, but walked over to the table where the gift of roses stood.

"AND THAT'S THAT"

Sophie Kerr has written a charming story with that title, which will delight especially every girl reader of this magazine. The story will be published in an early issue.

Wieniawski stalked after, caught up the flowers and dashed them to the floor, trampling on them.

"There was a woman always there," he roared. "You lie to me, eh?"

"My father's brother, you will never make me a bad woman. I'll die first." She spoke quietly. She looked down at the crushed flowers: her heart was there, crushed likewise.

"We'll see." From the wall he took down a short bull-whip and flourished it. "We'll see about this pride."

Mallory, in the hall, heard the voices, but he could make no sense of the words—Polish.

"No, no, no!" came Sonia's voice. This was followed immediately by a snapping sound and a moan.

MALLORY took the doorknob in his hand, tried his weight against the door, and was astonished to find it unlocked. He was in time to see the bull-whip flash around Sonia's body. And then something infinitely proper happened to Joseph Wieniawski, or Nikolai Muraviev, or whatever he called himself. The walls fell upon him, figuratively; he was pressed and rolled about upon a flaming gridiron; and when Mallory flung the whip upon him, Wieniawski-Muraviev was not an agreeable thing for the casual eye.

Mallory turned to Sonia. – She was still upon her knees, where she had fallen after the second blow, her palms against her cheeks, her beautiful eyes fairly discrediting what they saw. It was only when Mallory touched her gently on the shoulder that she was made to understand that this scene was not a dream.

"Will you come with me, Sonia?"

"Yes."

From below somewhere within her, rose a vast sense of the ironic. That *thing* trying to get upon its hands and knees had beaten her because she would not do the very thing she was now on the way to do.

"Any keepsakes you wish to take along?"

"No."

"Let's be off, then."

Mallory had stationed a taxicab at the corner, and into this he helped Sonia, whose mind and body were queerly numb. This kindly handsome man would be kind to her so long as he wanted her; so nothing mattered. But oh, the dreams, the dreams that had vanished forever!

"Whether that man is your uncle or not, we can't say; but he shall never lay eyes upon you again," said Mallory. "The dog! I understand everything, Sonia. A woman like you, unless she comes well armed and protected, generally goes through a variety of hells. But that's over with. The war spoiled one of my hands, Sonia. Will you mind that?"

"Which hand?"

"This."

Sonia groped for it and laid it against her cold cheek. She would give him her life, if he wanted it. What did it matter? To be sold, that was horror; but to give. . . . . That first day: his kindly aloofness, the complete understanding of her art, himself an artist! The thrill of climbing those stairs, the despair in going down them: from an environment that was natural to her instincts and education, to one that was unnatural, abhorrent! For a little while, then; let the future be what it might.

As the cab rolled on, Mallory threw all doubt, all questioning, out of his mind. He wanted Sonia. Miss Challoner and her talk of spring! She was right. He had not craved for music alone; he had oddly, in a bizarre fashion, sent forth his Call, and Sonia had answered. What his sister said, what his world said, would never matter. He and Sonia would build a world of their own. She had come forth into the night

with him, unquestioning; so there was no real fear in him regarding the end of his adventure.

"Do you care a little?" he asked.

"More than God will ever forgive."

"And you will marry me tomorrow?"

Thunder fell upon Sonia's ears. "What did you say?"

"Will you marry me tomorrow?"

SONIA began to laugh, wildly; but immediately this laughter stumbled into tears. Out of a dungeon, into the brilliant sunshine: she was blinded. She had forgotten that here in America men married the women they loved.

Mallory, with infinite understanding, put his arms around her and held her so all the way uptown to his sister's door.

As the cab stopped, Sonia whispered shyly: "You might kiss me. No other man shall."

"Good Lord! So I might!"

And the double laughter startled the silent street.

THE WATER BOTTLE

(Continued from page 80)

The bottle was little more than a yard away. His hands reached for it. The other man was there also, his hands stretched toward it. Which was the nearer? Hatch couldn't tell. He tried to shout, "I'll smash you, you bald-headed old bird, if you touch it," and then stopped, realizing with a faint shock of astonishment that he was no longer angry. Nor did he really want the bottle. What need of one water-bottle when one was afloat, as on a sea?

"It's them waters," thought Hatch confusedly, "them living waters." They inclosed him, with a coolness and sweetness beyond thought, a refreshment out of all knowledge. Little ripples and waves flooded him. He no longer felt the weight and dreary discomfort of that other shouting Hatch; he was perfectly light and unhampered. The delicious tide crept higher; he knew soon that he would taste it on his lips, drink from it as from a stream. He looked across, pityingly, condescendingly, out of his comfort, at the other man.

"*You* can have the bottle, you blighter," said Hatch from a great distance. "Dare say you'd get there first."

Across the bottle, in the silence, the other man's eyes met his without wonder or hostility—rather with a sort of abstracted benevolence. One hand he stretched out gropingly toward the bottle. With the other he scooped a palmful of sand; presently his forehead sank upon it slowly, dust upon dust. "You're welcome to it," Hatch murmured, "welcome to it, you pore old bald-headed bird. . . . . I've got—I've got—that dam' tune. . . . .

"Oh, stretch out de Hand, Lawd, and lay me in de river,
Oh, stretch out de Hand, Lawd, and lay me in de river,
Oh, stretch out de Hand, Lawd, and lay me in de river,
For I's got no tears to wash de stains away—"

The music broke, died into confused visions—a revival meeting, the river, sheep in a field, and Miss Hatch's little round face under her sandy Sunday curls. Then these visions also flickered and died.

"That 'ymn—and the water. The water—"

The moon rose. . . . . It was presently light again. And a burial party found them on their faces, their hands outstretched toward a round, flat, smooth stone.

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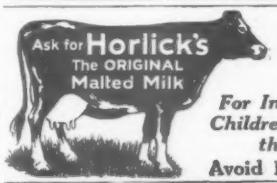
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THE VANISHED DUKE

(Continued from page 47)

Berrisford. But I think Sebright is right—just a rather tasteless joke. However, we'll find out all we can for him." He touched a bell on his desk.

Miss Satterthwaite appeared.

"Ah, Veronica," said the Chief, holding out the paper with the imprint to her. "Will you ask Scotland Yard to oblige me by making sure that they haven't got these finger-prints? And telegraph the anthropometrical measurements to Paris, Berlin, Lausanne, Vienna and Milan, asking for a reply as quick as possible."

I will leave out the other incidents of that first day's work with Mr. Quentin Quayne. Fascinating though they all were, none was particularly exciting. Scotland Yard reported during the afternoon that they could not identify the finger-prints we had submitted, and no reply came in from the Continental police-offices to which we had telegraphed. In the course of the day's work, I almost forgot the morning's visit of the Duke of Berrisford.

I WAS startlingly reminded of it next morning. A few minutes after the Chief came in (I had preceded his arrival by a quarter of an hour), the telephone-bell rang upon his desk. He took up the receiver.

"Hello! . . . . Yes? . . . . Sebright? . . . . What? Good God! . . . . Yes, I'll meet you at Berrisford House just as soon as I can get there." He put back the instrument and turned to me, his expression frankly startled. "The Duke of Berrisford has been murdered during the night—Sebright says in very mysterious circumstances." He picked up the telephone, spoke into it. "Ask Miss Satterthwaite if any answer has come in about the finger-prints we telegraphed yesterday."

A moment later Miss Satterthwaite appeared. She carried several telegrams, and a bulky file of typewritten documents.

"Any news, Veronica?" asked Mr. Quayne.

"Three replies, Chief," she said, putting the telegrams in front of him.

"Vladimir Voronseff," he said, picking them up one by one. "Vladimir Voronseff—the name seems familiar—have we got anything about him?"

"A little." She passed him the file, opened it at a sheet marked by a slip of paper. I drew near and looked over his shoulder. It was evidently a record of terrorist agents.

"'Vladimir Voronseff,'" read the Chief, "'age and origin unknown, implicated in the Sigursky Russian terrorist murders at Berne, July 1900, but escaped; arrested for complicity in terrorist bomb-outrage Berlin, April 1905, released on insufficient evidence; active in Russian Revolution 1905; finger-prints found Murievsky murder, Montreux 1910; reappeared Russian politics 1919, active member of Bolshevik party, believed to have quarreled with Lenin and left country, Jan. 1920.' H'm," commented Mr. Quayne grimly, "it looks as though we had something to add to his *dossier*. Come along with me, Mr. Creighton. This is part of your education."

But very few minutes had elapsed when Quentin Quayne's limousine drew up outside Berrisford House—a big, gaunt, eighteenth-century mansion in the neighborhood of Berkeley Square. Quivering, I confess, with excitement, I followed my chief as, carrying the little attaché-case he told me he always kept ready in the car, he stumped up the three or four steps to the door. It was opened immediately for us by a scared and white-faced footman. Sebright, with a couple of his satellites in the background, was waiting for us in the luxuriously furnished hall. He greeted Mr. Quayne eagerly.

"A most extraordinary case, Q. Q!" he said. "Most extraordinary—I think it will puzzle even you."

The Chief smiled a trifle grimly.

"You interest me, Sebright," he said. "Let's get to work. Where was the murder committed?"

"In the Duke's apartments on the first floor."

Mr. Quayne moved toward the staircase.

"Well, the first thing is to see the body. You haven't touched it, I presume?"

Sebright smiled peculiarly.

"That's the extraordinary thing about it, Q. Q. There isn't any body. It has utterly disappeared."

Mr. Quayne stopped at the foot of the staircase.

"What—without trace?"

"Without trace. There has evidently been a terrible struggle upstairs—blood everywhere—you will see for yourself. But the body has completely vanished. It defeats me. The place has been searched from top to bottom. But how they got it out of the house, I can't imagine."

"H'm!" said the Chief. "Let us go upstairs."

The Duke's personal apartments on the first floor consisted of four rooms—a sort of small study or sitting-room, a bedroom, a dressing-room and a bathroom. Intercommunicating doors led from each to each, but each had a door opening on the corridor. So Sebright explained as we went up the staircase. It was in the bedroom that the murder had been committed, and Sebright led us directly to the fatal apartment. Outside the door, a policeman and a frightened-looking young man stood in conversation.

"I put a guard on the door till you came," said Sebright. "This is Humphreys, the Duke's valet. You will probably want to question him."

"I probably shall," said the Chief. "But first we'll view the room for ourselves."

"There must have been a regular rough-and-tumble in it," commented Sebright as he opened the door. "We've touched nothing, of course."

AS Sebright said, the room, at the first glance, bore every evidence of a struggle. A couple of chairs were overturned. One of the curtains near the window was torn from its pole. A dressing-gown lay heaped upon the floor. The bedclothes were thrown back in disorder; and gruesomely significant, in the middle of the white undersheet was a great patch of now dried and dark-hued blood. Pinned upon that patch, with a daggerlike knife through its center, was a piece of paper marked with a familiar hand-print—in blood, this time—and under the imprint, also crudely written in blood, the words: "*Exit the Duke of Berrisford.*"

Sebright pointed it out.

"It meant something, after all, yesterday," he said. "The murderer must have forced him back on the bed and stabbed him. That's obvious."

The Chief nodded.

"You have questioned the inmates of the house of course," he said. "Did anyone hear any sort of noise during the night?"

"No one," replied Sebright. "That's one of the strange features of the case."

"Where do *you* sleep?" queried the Chief, turning sharply to the valet.

"At the top of the house, sir," was the reply. "There is a bell and a house telephone by His Grace's bed by which he can call me during the night should he require me. But I heard no sound last night."

"And when did you last see the Duke?"

"He retired at ten-thirty, sir. I attended him, and saw him into bed. I then put away his clothes in the dressing-room and went to my own room. When I came as

usual to call him at eight-thirty this morning, I found—this." The man broke off with a horrified catch in his voice.

Mr. Quayne nodded without remark. He went quickly across to the windows and examined them.

"Every door and window in the house was found locked inside this morning," interposed Sebright. "No entrance or exit was effected by any of those. Anyway, it would have been difficult. There is a straight drop to the street, and I had a constable up and down in front of the house all night, relieved every four hours. I promised the Duke I would do so—more to humor him than because I thought he was in any danger—and I kept my promise."

Mr. Quayne again made no remark. He was going busily round the room, examining everything like a nosing terrier. He picked up the dressing-gown from the floor. There was blood upon the inside of one of the cuffs.

"The Duke's dressing-gown?" He turned sharply to the valet.

"Yes sir."

"No sign of his pajamas?"

"No sir. They must be on—on the body, sir—wherever that is." The valet added the last clause despairingly.

Mr. Quayne grunted. He opened his attaché-case, took out a large magnifying glass and went to the bed. We watched him in silence while he examined it meticulously. Once he grunted, picked up something too small for me to see and looked at it under the magnifying glass. Then with his penknife he scraped a little of the dried patch of blood from the sheet and took it gingerly on the blade to the table near the windows.

"Get me one of the test-tubes from my case, Mr. Creighton," he said, "and the vial labeled 'No. 1'."

I TOOK the articles he demanded from the neatly fitted little row of such in his attaché-case and handed them to him. He put the dried spot of blood into the test-tube, poured a drop of the liquid from the vial upon it.

"Now vial No. 2." I passed it to him. "The Strzyowski serum," he said to Sebright, as he poured a drop into the test-tube. "I always keep a fresh supply in my case. Only a rough test under these conditions, of course, but it will probably give us a hint. —Now the spirit-lamp—and the microscope with a slide and cover," he added to me.

I lit the spirit-lamp into a tiny flame at his orders. He poured the drop or two of liquid onto the glass slide, held it for a moment over the flame until it had dried to a pinch of residue, put on the cover, and slipped it into the microscope.

"Blood, of course," said Sebright, as Mr. Quayne straightened himself from his examination.

"Oh, of course, blood," replied the Chief. "Mr. Creighton—another test-tube, please."

He took carefully a bloodstained thread from the cuff of the dressing-gown and subjected it to the same experiment.

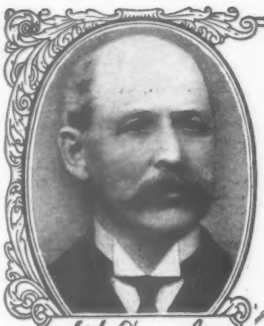
"There are a good many bloodstains on the floor leading into the bathroom," remarked Sebright, as Mr. Quayne pushed away the microscope with a grunt. "The murderer evidently went there to wash his hands."

"I had noticed them," said the Chief. "Let us go there."

He went briskly in front of us, through the intervening dressing-room, into the bathroom.

"There's the towel he used," said Sebright, pointing to one tucked into the towel-rack.

Mr. Quayne picked it up, looked at it, scrutinized it under his magnifying glass, put it back again. Then he went to the toilet-articles on the glass shelf over the lavatory-basin—a shaving-brush, a stick of shaving-

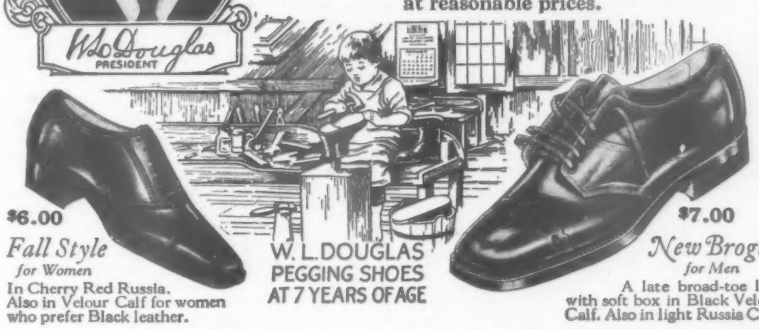


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soap in its case, a safety razor and a pair of scissors. He examined each carefully under his glass. Then, awkwardly but yet quickly, considering his artificial limb, he went over the floor on his hands and knees with the magnifying glass. I helped him to rise, expectant of some comment, but he said nothing.

"If you will go into the study at the other side of the bedroom, Q. Q., you'll see something else interesting," said Sebright.

"We'll look at it," replied the Chief, and once more he went, leading our little procession, through the dressing-room and the bedroom to the study beyond.

"That supplies a part of the motive, anyway, I think," said Sebright, indicating the open door of a large safe dissimulated in the wall. A bunch of keys lay on the floor in front of it. "We found it like that this morning."

"H'm!" The Chief turned once more to the valet. "It was closed last night, I suppose?"

"Yes sir. I am sure of that," replied the man. "I went through here after His Grace had retired. His Grace was working in this room last evening after dinner with Mr. Mortimer, sir."

"Mr. Mortimer? Who is he?"

"His Grace's agent, sir. We have telephoned for him to come round as soon as possible."

"He may be able to tell us what was in the safe," explained Sebright.

Apart from the open door of the safe, there was nothing abnormal in the aspect of this snugly furnished room. The Chief went across to a writing-desk between the windows. He held up a newspaper cutting headed: "Lenin's Mortal Illness. Quarrels for his Succession."

"Have you seen this before?" he asked the valet.

"Yes sir. That has been there some days, sir. His Grace often cut things like that from the papers and kept them. He was very hot against the Reds, sir, as I dare say you know."

"That's probably the key to the whole business," murmured Sebright.

"And this?" Mr. Quayne pointed to an "A. B. C. Railway Guide" lying open upon the desk. "Do you know if the Duke looked up a train yesterday?"

"Not that I am aware of, sir. He had no call to do so."

"H'm!" Mr. Quayne pored over the open leaves with his magnifying glass, and then turned to the shipping advertisements at the end.

AT that moment another white-faced man came deferentially into the room. He addressed himself to Sebright:

"Beg pardon, sir. But Mr. Mortimer has just come, sir. I thought perhaps you'd like to know, sir."

"Thank you," said Sebright. "Send him up at once. This is the Duke's butler, Quayne."

The Chief turned from the pages of the "A. B. C." he was studying.

"Ah," he said. "I was just going to send for you. Is there a white cat on the premises—a Persian, probably?"

The butler looked surprised, as we all did at this apparently irrelevant question.

"Yes sir. As a matter of fact, His Grace was very fond of it, sir."

"Where is it now?"

The butler pondered a moment.

"I don't know, sir. I don't think I've seen it this morning. I'll try and find it, sir, if you wish."

"Please do. And send up Mr. Mortimer."

The butler withdrew on tiptoe, as though from the death-chamber itself.

"That reminds me, sir," volunteered the valet suddenly. "The cat was in these rooms when I left His Grace last night. His Grace told me to let it remain. As the butler said, sir, His Grace was very fond of the animal and often it used to sleep all night on the big chair in this room."

"But you did not see it this morning?"

"No sir. I'm sure of that. It must have slipped out when—when whoever it was got into these rooms."

Any further comment from Mr. Quayne was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Mortimer, a brisk, businesslike little man with a face gravely concerned—as well it might be.

Mr. Quayne went direct to the point.

"Ah, Mr. Mortimer," he said. "You were working with the Duke in this room last night, I understand. Can you tell us if there were any valuables in that safe?" He pointed to the open door.

Little Mr. Mortimer's eyes started as he stared at the safe.

"Good heavens, yes!" he cried. "There was twenty thousand pounds in bearer securities, and two thousand pounds in bank-notes!"

"How do you know that?"

"I brought them here myself, last night. The Duke asked me yesterday to get those securities out of the bank, to cash a check for two thousand pounds, and to bring them round to him after dinner. I handed them to him in this room—it would have been about nine o'clock—and I saw him lock them up in that safe."

"Do you know why he required those securities—and particularly that large sum in cash?"

MR. MORTIMER shrugged his shoulders.

"He did not tell me, and naturally I did not inquire. The Duke did not like to be questioned. I supposed that he was going abroad, as he did once before."

"When was that?"

"Let me see—it was in the spring of 1919."

"And did he take bearer securities and a large sum in cash on that occasion?"

"Yes. I remember expostulating with him, and being severely snubbed for my pains. Though perhaps I ought not say it after this terrible business, the Duke had an eccentric streak in him, you know—very obstinate and peculiar sometimes."

"Was he peculiar last night?"

"He was—rather."

"In what way peculiar?"

"I can't define it—snappy and bad-tempered—not quite himself—one couldn't meet his eyes."

"Did he say anything to you of a threatening document he had received?"

"No." Mr. Mortimer shook his head. "Not a word."

"And how long was the Duke abroad on that last occasion?"

"A good many months—nearly a year, in fact."

"Did you know where he had been travelling?"

"No. He did not tell me—and snubbed me when I asked quite innocently. As I say, sometimes he was peculiar."

Mr. Quayne turned to the valet.

"And did you accompany the Duke on his travels?"

"No sir. He didn't take anyone with him either time."

"Either time? When was the other occasion?"

"Soon after I took service with His Grace, sir—in 1909. He returned in May, 1910."

"Do you know in what part of the world he had been during that time?"

"No sir. His Grace never mentioned his travels. He went away, quite suddenly, one day—not even taking his clothes—and one day, months later, there he was again."

"H'm! Can you throw any light on his actions or whereabouts during that period, Mr. Mortimer?"

"No. That was in my predecessor's time. I did not become the Duke's agent until 1912," replied little Mr. Mortimer.

"I confess I can't quite see what theory you have in your head, Q. Q.," said Sebright. "We seem to be getting right away from the main point of who killed the Duke, how they got in, how they got out again, and what has been done with the body. There's no doubt in my mind that the Duke has been done away with."

Mr. Quayne smiled at him, rather grimly. "Yes, you are quite right there, Sebright—you have even hit the exact phrase. But we'll leave the formulation of theories until we have completed our investigation. —By the way,"—he turned to the valet,—"do you recognize the knife there, stabbed into the bed?"

"Yes sir. It is the one that usually lies on the writing-table in this room. His Grace used it as a paper-knife, sir."

Mr. Quayne nodded. "Settles that. Now, just go and see whether any of the Duke's clothes are missing, will you?"

THE valet departed, and Mr. Quayne turned again to Sebright.

"You had the house watched last night. Are those constables here?"

"Yes. I telephoned for them. They are waiting downstairs."

"I should like to question them."

"By all means."

While Sebright went out of the room to fetch up his men, Mr. Quayne addressed himself to the Duke's agent.

"Who would succeed to the Dukedom?" he asked.

Mr. Mortimer shrugged his shoulders.

"It becomes extinct, I believe. The Duke was the last of his line, and he came into it only indirectly. Tragic, the way these ancient families die out."

Sebright reëntered the room with a police-constable.

"This is the man who watched the house during the period from six to ten P. M. last night," he said.

The policeman had only disappointing replies to Mr. Quayne's sharp interrogations. He had patrolled up and down for fifty yards in front of the house from six to ten P. M. The street was quiet and almost deserted. He had seen no one suspicious, at all. The Duke himself had driven up in his car at six-fifteen, and entered the house. At about nine-five a gentleman in evening dress, carrying a small suitcase, had driven up in a taxi and been admitted by the front door. At nine-twenty a servant had come out of the house, fetched a taxi, and the gentleman had driven away again—this time without the suitcase. He recognized Mr. Mortimer as the gentleman in question.

"That reminds me!" exclaimed Mr. Mortimer suddenly. "I left that suitcase here. I brought the securities in it. The Duke kindly offered to send it back direct to my office, as I was going on to a supper-party immediately."

At that moment, the valet reëntered the room.

"Mr. Mortimer says he left a small suitcase here last night," said Mr. Quayne. "Do you know anything about it?"

"Yes. I saw it, sir. It was left in this room after His Grace retired, sir." The valet looked around the room. "But—it's curious—it doesn't seem to be here now. And no one has been in to clean, sir."

"I think we can provisionally assume that the suitcase served to carry away those securities again," remarked Mr. Quayne. "And what about the clothes? Are any missing?"

"Yes sir. An old tweed suit His Grace used for fishing on wet days last year, a pair of shooting-boots, a flannel shirt, the old overcoat he wore with the suit, and a soft hat. I've looked everywhere for them, sir, but there's no doubt they're gone."

Q. Q. nodded. "All right. Let's hear the

second constable," he said. Sebright stepped out and summoned the man.

The second policeman stated that he had patrolled from ten P. M. to two A. M. He had seen no suspicious persons about the house. A minute or so after he had come on duty, a man—he had spoken to him and ascertained that he was the butler—had come out by the servants' entrance. At five minutes past midnight, a man had come out of the front door, carrying a small suitcase. He had challenged him, and the man, who spoke in the tones of a gentleman, had said that he was the Duke's agent, had wished him good-night, and jumped into a passing taxi.

"Who was that man?" queried Sebright sharply. "Mr. Mortimer had left two hours before. It was one of the fellows we are after, for a certainty. Can you describe his appearance, Rogers?"

"Yes sir. He was a tall, clean-shaven man, wearing an overcoat and a soft hat. Of course, as he didn't seem to be a suspicious character, I didn't take much heed of him, but I did notice that he wore rather heavy boots. Picking up that taxi, as he did, he was gone in a moment or two."

SEBRIGHT was suddenly excited.

"We're on the track at last, Q. Q.!" he cried. "Don't you think so?"

"Decidedly," Mr. Quayne agreed quietly. "You are sure the man was clean-shaven, constable?"

"Quite sure, sir."

"The Duke of Berrisford had a mustache and beard," I murmured, almost to myself.

Mr. Quayne turned on me sharply.

"All right, Mr. Creighton. Keep your thoughts to yourself for the present. —Did you see anyone else, constable?"

"Yes sir. At twelve-forty-five the butler came back, and let himself in at the servants' door with a key. A little time later, I heard the front door being bolted and chained from the inside."

Just at that moment, the butler came into the room.

"We've searched the house, but we can't find any trace of the cat anywhere, sir," he reported.

"Never mind that now," said Mr. Quayne. "The constable here reports that you left the house just after ten, and returned at twelve-forty-five. Where had you been?"

"Yes sir. That is so, sir. I went to have a little bridge in the servants' hall at Lord Bradwood's, round the corner, sir. I can prove that, sir." The man looked frightened under Sebright's suspicious glance. "I went with His Grace's permission, sir."

"And you locked up the front door, *after* you returned?"

"Yes sir. I always do the locking up myself, sir."

"And was there anyone in the hall when you came to lock up?"

"No sir. The footman on duty is allowed to go to bed at twelve o'clock if there's nothing doing, as there wasn't last night, sir."

"And the door was normally locked and bolted when you came downstairs this morning?"

"Yes sir. It hadn't been interfered with in any way, sir."

"Very good," said Mr. Quayne. "By the way, if you look up the chimney in the dressing-room, I think you may find the missing cat."

"You don't say, sir!" ejaculated the astonished butler, hurrying out of the room.

A minute later he returned with the sooty and bloodstained corpse of the cat in his hands.

"You're right, sir!" he exclaimed. "Up the chimney it was. And it's head almost cut off! The brutes! It must have attacked them, sir, and they killed it to keep it quiet."



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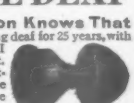
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"Possibly," agreed Mr. Quayne. "And now the third constable, Sebright?" He glanced at his watch. "Time is pressing."

THE third constable had seen nothing, absolutely nothing. He had patrolled from two A. M. to six A. M. Sebright cross-questioned him. Had he left his beat at all? Rather confusedly, the policeman admitted that he had. He had heard a police-whistle blown in an adjoining street and had run round the corner in case assistance was required. It appeared that a couple of men had been detected in a burglary in the vicinity and had been chased by the officer on the beat, who blew his whistle for help. The constable had caught a glimpse of the fugitives away down the street and had taken up the hunt, desisting when he saw them run into the arms of three policemen at the farther end. He might have been away—he admitted—for ten minutes. Not more. The time was three-fifteen A. M.—three-fifteen to about three-twenty-five.

"Now we're coming to it!" proclaimed Sebright triumphantly. "That ten minutes was the time in which the Duke's body was removed from the house! I must examine those alleged burglars—depend upon it, they were accomplices, set to lure the patrol off his beat! I think we're thoroughly on the track now, Q. Q. There were probably three of them, concealed somewhere in the house. One of them walked out at midnight with the cash and securities and framed up a plan to get his associates away with the body. A car probably dashed up the moment the patrol was out of sight."

Mr. Quayne smiled.

"You may be right, of course, Sebright. But why, do you suggest, should they remove the body?"

Sebright pondered a moment, and then had an idea.

"It's possible—just possible—that they did not after all kill the Duke on the spot, isn't it? They may have merely wounded him, and now be holding him concealed somewhere for purposes of their own. He must have been intensely hated by the Red secret-societies—to my certain knowledge, he spent thousands on anti-Communist propaganda-work."

"Yes. I should say they disliked him extremely," agreed the Chief. "Your theory is possibly the correct one—but so far you haven't explained how anyone got into the house unseen, nor how the hypothetical people who left between three-fifteen and three-twenty-five managed to lock all the doors and windows behind them."

"I haven't commenced my investigation yet, Q. Q.," replied Sebright with a touch of irritation. "I've just been letting you run your eye over the case. I dare say I shall find plenty of clues when I get to work."

"Well, I'll leave you to it," said Mr. Quayne, looking again at his watch. "I have several important matters to attend to, this morning. But whatever you do or do not find here, there's one very important thing I strongly recommend you to attend to. A Wilson boat sails from Hull to Riga at five o'clock this evening. Among her passengers, you will find a gentleman about five feet eleven in height, clean-shaven, dressed in the clothes missing from the Duke of Berrisford's wardrobe and carrying Mr. Mortimer's suitcase with twenty thousand pounds' worth of securities and two thousand in notes inside it. He will certainly have a deep scratch across the back of his left hand. He arrived at Hull at nine-fifty-five this morning by the four-forty-five from King's Cross. I cannot tell you what name is on his passport, but he is known to the Continental police as Vladimir Voronseff, a very dangerous member of Russian terrorist organizations for the past twenty-five years. If you will wire to the Hull police to arrest him, you will have the key to this mystery in your hands. And I shall be very much obliged to you if you would bring your prisoner round to my office tomorrow morning. I should very much like a word or two with him."

Sebright stared at him.

"But how in the world do you know that?" he exclaimed.

"I haven't time to explain now," replied the Chief, with his grim smile. "It's eleven-thirty, and I have an appointment at a quarter to twelve. But whatever you do, don't let Vladimir Voronseff sail from Hull by that boat this evening. Wire at once!"

"I will, of course, but—"

The Chief cut short Sebright's bewildered entreaty for elucidation.

"And on no account let a word leak out to the press about any of this before tomorrow. Swear all the servants to secrecy. I'll expect to see you with Mr. Voronseff in the morning at my office. —And you,"—he turned to the valet,—"come also."

WITH the air of a man already behind time, Mr. Quayne hurried quickly out of the room and down the stairs. I followed him.

As the car whirred us back to the office, I ventured on a remark.

"I've got a hazy idea of what's in your mind, Mr. Quayne," I said. "But if I'm right, one thing baffles me. The Duke of Berrisford's terror yesterday was surely genuine!"

He looked at me shrewdly.

"I think you'll do," he commented. "Yes. The Duke's terror was genuine enough—and with good reason. But now we'll put it out of our minds till tomorrow. I have other things to think of."

Mr. Quentin Quayne was Napoleonic in his faculty of shutting unwanted matters from his mind and concentrating himself fully and utterly in any direction he wished. I am not so fortunately constituted, and I confess that from then until the next morning the problem of the Duke of Berrisford's fate haunted me, mingling even with my dreams and waking me from my sleep that night.

We had scarcely settled ourselves to work in the office next morning when the telephone-bell rang. Mr. Quayne answered it.

"Yes—Sebright? Oh, you've got him? Good! I'm here, waiting for you." He smiled as he put the receiver back and turned to me. "In a few minutes, Mr. Creighton, we may—or may not—solve the mystery of the Duke of Berrisford."

We had not long to wait, though the minutes dragged. Not a quarter of an hour had elapsed when the door opened, and Sebright appeared. He held the door wide open for the entrance of a tall, clean-shaven, haggard-faced man, flanked by a couple of athletic-looking detectives. The prisoner's wrists were handcuffed together in front of him, and on the back of the left hand was the long scratch that Mr. Quayne had prophesied. Though it eluded my exact identification, there was something vaguely familiar about the man as he was marched to the center of the room.

"There's your man, Q. Q.," said Sebright. "According to his passport, his name is Sergius Gregoriev."

"But his name among the comrades is Vladimir Voronseff," remarked Mr. Quayne, with his quiet smile. "Is that not so?" he added, addressing himself to the prisoner.

The man held himself with a sneeringly cool self-assurance, but watching him, I thought there was a maniacal gleam in his eyes.

"It is," he replied insolently. There was just the faintest foreign twang in it; otherwise his English was perfect. "Vladimir Voronseff. You'll hear it often enough when

I get back to Russia. Vladimir Voronseff—the only man Ilyitch Lenin was ever afraid of. And now it's my turn." He laughed, shortly and rather horribly. Then he reverted abruptly to his insolent calmness. "I shall expect diplomatic satisfaction for this outrage," he said. "I advise you gentlemen in your own interest to release me at once. You can have no possible charge against me."

"Indeed?" remarked Mr. Quayne, his keen eyes fixed on the man's face. "And what happened to the Duke of Berrisford?"

The prisoner grinned evilly, and I was certain of the maniacal light in his eyes.

"I killed him," he said, as though it were the most natural thing in the world. "But I know your law—you cannot charge me with that."

"That's true," muttered Sebright. "We can't charge him with it till the body's found—we can't even accept his confession. Now do you see, Q. Q., why they did away with the corpse? I never thought of it!" He turned to the prisoner. "No, my friend," he said triumphantly, "but you're going to do a nice long turn for being in wrongful possession of an attaché-case full of securities—and meanwhile we'll find the Duke's body if we have to search all England for it!"

Mr. Quayne made a motion with his hand.

"Just leave him to me for a moment, Sebright," he said. "And why did you kill the Duke of Berrisford?" he challenged the prisoner.

The man stared at him insolently.

"It was necessary," he said curtly. "Either Vladimir Voronseff or the Duke of Berrisford had to die."

"Quite." Mr. Quayne spoke the word very quietly as he rose with an unhurried deliberation from his chair. He went across to his prisoner, looking him fixedly in the eyes as he came. "But you made a mistake." He held the man's eyes in a strange fascination as he advanced and spoke in quietly level tones. "It is Vladimir Voronseff who is going to die. You understand? *It is Vladimir Voronseff who is going to die!*"

AS Mr. Quayne uttered the last word, his fist shot out in a pugilist's blow from his immensely powerful broad shoulders, straight at the man's head. The fellow went down like a log between the two startled detectives.

"Steady, Q. Q.!" cried Sebright. I myself had jumped from my seat in horror at this cowardly assault upon a pinioned prisoner.

Mr. Quayne stood back from his victim, contemplated the man lying unconscious on the floor.

"Take off those handcuffs!" he ordered curtly. "Some water, Mr. Creighton!"

I fetched it in an instant. He dabbed it on the man's head, forced some liquid between his teeth from a pocket flask. Presently the man's chest heaved, and supported by Mr. Quayne's arm, Vladimir Voronseff sat up, blinking stupidly.

"Where am I?" he gasped. He stared at the Chief. "Ah, Mr. Quayne, I promised to telephone you this morning, didn't I? I'm alive—but—but I can't quite remember—I think I must have been in an accident. Or have I been ill?"

I stared at him in bewilderment. The man's face had altered. The vicious, insolent cruelty of it had been replaced by a feeble vacuousness. I recognized suddenly that loose-lipped trembling mouth, those bulbous eyes, unfamiliar though was the clean-shaven face. Sebright recognized it also.

"Good God!" he exclaimed. "The Duke himself!"

"The Duke himself," confirmed Mr. Quayne, helping the shaken man to a chair.

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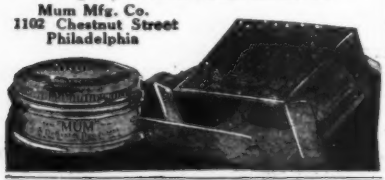
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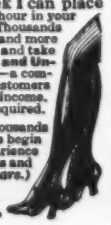
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"Yes, Duke," he said to him, "you have been ill—very ill—and unless you agree to put yourself under the care of a very clever doctor friend of mine, you may have a relapse that will be past cure."

The Duke passed his hand dazedly across his brow.

"I'll do anything you suggest," he said feebly. "I feel I have just escaped a terrible danger—but it's all foggy to me."

Q. Q. went back to his desk, seated himself and took a sheet of notepaper.

"Fetch his valet in," he said to me, looking up from the note he was writing.

I did so.

The man's astonishment when he beheld his master seated in that chair was almost comic. He stared round at us.

"*It's him!*" he gasped. "His Grace—*alive!* Even without his beard, I'd have known him anywhere." He ran across to his master. "Oh, Your Grace!" he cried. "What have they done to you, the scoundrels? What's happened to your beard?"

The Duke instinctively felt over his chin.

"My beard!" he repeated, stupidly. "It's gone! Mr. Quayne, who shaved off my beard?"

The Chief put the note he had written into an envelope, stuck it down.

"Don't worry about that now," he said kindly. "My car will take you and your man round to this doctor in Harley Street." He held out the note to the valet. "And if you take my advice, you will put yourself completely under his care. You will find that all this trouble will vanish like a bad dream—forever."

WHEN the Duke of Berrisford and his valet had departed—the two detectives had withdrawn earlier on a nod from Sebright—and we three were left alone in the room, Sebright gave voice to his impatient curiosity.

"I still don't understand, Q. Q.," he said. "The whole thing beats me!"

The Chief leaned back in his chair.

"A scheduled case, though comparatively uncommon." He smiled at us. "You will find the classic example in the works of Dr. Prince—the case of Miss Beauchamp, a New England young lady, who, in the year 1898, was treated by Dr. Prince for a strange triple dissociation of personality. There are some hundreds of other instances. Miss Beauchamp developed three personalities, two that knew nothing of each other, and one that knew both—and all those personalities were utterly at variance with each other. One of the awkward incidents, apart from the clash of moral ideas and actions, was a very near escape from suicide for Miss Beauchamp. R. L. Stevenson did not know that there was such an authentically scientific basis for his story when he created *Dr. Jekyll* and *Mr. Hyde*. The unfortunate man whom I have just sent round to a specialist friend of mine is—probably as the result of a somewhat degenerate heredity—one of the examples which crop up from time to time.

"He possesses three personalities: the Duke of Berrisford, who knows nothing of Vladimir Voronseff; and another, fluctuating intermediate personality—the personality that Mr. Mortimer described as peculiar and which had the forethought to provide itself with a considerable amount of cash for vaguely foreseen eventualities, and apparently a considerable amount of insane cunning. We must postulate that intermediate personality, but I think my specialist friend will diagnose its existence. And finally, the totally distinct personality of Vladimir Voronseff, fundamentally unbalanced and homicidally insane as are most Terrorist revolutionaries, which perceived the Duke of Berrisford as an obstacle in its way and hated it with a mortal hatred—just as one of Miss Beauchamp's personalities hated its rival personality, though both were lodged in the same body."

"What was it aiming at, then?" queried Sebright.

"At getting back to Russia and taking part in the scramble for power after the death of Lenin. If my theory is correct, as a young man in Switzerland,—where he was educated, and then never expecting to be one day Duke of Berrisford,—he fell under the influence of some of the numerous Russian Terrorists for whom Switzerland has always been a place of refuge, and threw in his lot with them under a Russian pseudonym. Some hereditary influence from his Russian mother may have helped the emergence of a definite Russian personality. And then, probably, one fine day, he woke up, as it were—he probably thought he had been ill and suffering from loss of memory; at any rate, he was once more the son of Lord Clavering and eventually the Duke of Berrisford. But neither personality was stable in him, and during a quarter of a century he has alternated between the two—if you compare the chronology of Vladimir Voronseff with that of the Duke of Berrisford you will find that the activities of the one coincide with the absences of the other. That is the rough outline; the details probably no one will ever know."

"BUT how did you deduce all this?" said Sebright.

"When he came round to me with that imprint of the red hand, I disbelieved, as you did, in the authenticity of the menace. But I was convinced by his general manner and particularly by his *certainty* of danger, though he could give no reason for it, that his subconscious mind knew more of the origin of that childish bogey than he could say. In fact, I thought that probably, obsessed with fears of a Red revolution as he notoriously was, he had automatically and unconsciously sent it to himself—as in fact he did. But when you telephoned me that he had been assassinated, I confess I was shaken and startled—especially as, simultaneously, we received from Berlin, Paris and Lausanne the identification of the finger-prints as those of Vladimir Voronseff, a well-known Terrorist criminal.

"We go round to Berrisford House, and we find firstly that there is no corpse and only very obviously artificial evidences of struggle in the room. No one has effected burglarious entry. There was a large patch of blood on the sheet, and on the sheet also were a number of short white hairs—those of a cat. The Strzyowski test established at once that the blood was not human, although the blood on the cuffs of the dressing-gown was. Evidently the wearer had killed the cat and been scratched in the process. In the bathroom, I discovered one or two hairs from a beard in the junction of a pair of scissors; also the shaving-brush was still slightly damp. The inference from that was obvious. In the sitting-room was the newspaper cutting about Lenin, and an 'A. B. C.' open at the timetable to Hull. I could just see the dent of a finger-nail under the four-forty-five. The Duke's agent testified to the peculiar business of the securities and the cash. Their present absence was evident. The constable established clearly that no stranger had left the house except the one clean-shaven man with the suitcase. To my mind, it was all as plain as daylight." He broke off and smiled at us.

"When you had proved my hypothesis by bringing Vladimir Voronseff here this morning, I saw at once that he was, as I expected, the Duke himself. I saw also that he firmly believed himself to be Voronseff and the Duke to be dead. He could have been disabused of that belief by a long psychological process. The problem was how to do it on the spot in order to

convince *you*, Sebright, as the representative of the law, who would otherwise certainly have arrested him on the preliminary charge of theft, and perhaps in the sequel have ineradicably fixed the Voronseff personality as a permanence. There was just one chance—the cerebral commotion caused by a violent blow. I took that chance, with the happy result we have seen."

"But why did he fake up all that appearance of murder?" asked Sebright. "He could have just walked off—vanished—if he wanted to."

"Remember that Voronseff is more than a little insane. In insane minds the distinction between the subjective and the objective is often not very clear," said Q. Q. "To his fuddled brain, all that bluff may have had some queer symbolical reality." He turned to me. "As I told you yesterday, Mr. Creighton, in this business we always come back to the complexities of human nature—you cannot know too much about them. We have saved an innocent man from prison, at the least."

"But surely Vladimir Voronseff has many times brought himself within the law?" I said, trying to get at the fundamental ethics of it.

"My dear fellow, you surely would not propose to make the Duke of Berrisford responsible for the crimes committed by a person of whom he is utterly ignorant—and whose existence, thanks to my Harley Street friend, is now almost certainly at an end!"

("The Fourth Degree," another of these remarkable exploits of Quentin Quayne, detective extraordinary, will appear in an early issue of The Red Book Magazine.)

DESTINY

(Continued from page 41)

to her. And now she strode the floor and wrung her hands, whispering:

"Mamma! I want you. Mamma, I want you!"

This gloomy humor vanished like a whiff of black smoke. She studied herself in the long cheval glass, and turned her back on her image with a grimace of disgust. She bent down to see herself in the mirror of her dressing-table. She made a face at it. At last, fagged with her long patrol, she ran and hurled herself upon her bed and cried and cried.

And so at last she fell asleep with all the lights ablaze, her face veiled in her wet hair, her knees hunched up.

The angel of derision, entering now the room, as she lay drugged with slumber, saw her, and stood wondering, amused, studying her as one might study a house for rent. And then the angel, bidding a good-by to the mere spirit's unhampered freedom from every restraint, bade the soul of Niobe begone. It withdrew, wondering, to the mysterious sea whence souls come and whither they return. And the angel forthwith crept into the empty tenement and filled every crevice, adjusting itself to each as best it could.

Niobe was no more; but none of her acquaintance would ever know.

Chapter Two

JOEL KIMLIN knew hardly more of the man he waited to kill than a soldier knows of the anonymous enemy whose helmet glimmers above the opposite trench. His feud was as vague as the hatred that flames in wars.

The only real grudge of his own against Josh Tapper, for the creak of whose wagon-wheel he listened, and for the spark of whose pipe he stared into the night so fiercely, was the injury of delay. Josh was keeping Joel up, keeping him cold and uncomfortable. If Josh hadn't been one of the orn'ry Tappers, he would have come along at once, been shot down promptly and carried home in his careening wagon by his frightened horses.

Joel's grandmother, Gran'maw Haydock, had sent him out to kill Josh.

She had come dashing into the Kimlin yard at dusk so fast that the thirty-two pistol she always carried loaded and cocked in her lap jounced to the floor of the buggy and went off with a bang. The noise sent all the Kimlins to cover behind bureaus, stoves, and under beds and cupboards.

They had been surprised at supper, and assumed that their inveterate enemies, the Tappers, had come raiding. None of the Kimlins saw Gran'maw till she appeared at the kitchen door and had nearly been blown to pieces by three guns before she was recognized.

She found the supper table in the kitchen deserted, the coffee-cups steaming, and the pone and bacon smoking on the plates. From door-jambs, cupboards and from under beds the Kimlins appeared as they dropped the muzzles of their weapons and lowered the hammers. They laughed with mountainous guffaws at the joke of nearly massacreein' Gran'maw. But she was serious, and worse.

She began at once with the vinegary contempt she bore for all weaklings:

"Come out of that, you clay-eatin' trash, or I'll brain you all. Do you know what's just happened? O' course not! You're the know-nothin'est passels of uselessness I ever did see.

"I was down to the village to get some can' tomattus and beans. I plumb forgot it was election day. Fust off I knowed, Josh Tapper and your cousin Linus was fightin' like two bobcats. Josh had ought to have licked Linus easy, bein' only twenty-eight to Linus' forty-eight, but Linus is the biggest of the two, and bime-by he handed Josh a belt in the jaw that knocked him sixteen ways for Sunday. Then Line jumped him and straddled his stummick, and before Josh could roll out of the way, Line was tryin' to gouge out Josh's eyes, or twist his nose off, either one, and I was hollerin' to him for luck. Just then Josh's paw—that old skunk of a Jim Tapper—come runnin' up with a pistol loaded and all and—well, Jim dassen't even shoot yore cousin Linus. But he lifts one of Josh's hands outen Linus' hair and puts in it the gun all set for shootin'. And then—me? I was standin' up in the buggy lookin' on. I tried to warn Linus—I seen it all. But whilst Line went on thumbin' Josh's eyes out, Josh put the gun ag'in' Linus' side and shot him three times right acrost the small of the back. Doc Keech, it was, they took Linus into the office of. I followed to see if I could help him any, and Linus reco'nized me and reaches for my hand, and he says, says he: 'You'll square this for me, Gran'maw. Good-by!' The doctor put me out to leave him rest, and I hurried all the ways here."

SHE was weeping like the sad little old woman she was. The Kimlins breathed hard. They had returned to the table and wolfed their food with viciousness, but their jaws gaped at the loss of one of their best fighters. To have Linus killed by a squirt like Josh was fearsome.

Gran'maw waited a moment before she spoke again. Then she said quietly enough:

"Well, don't all speak at once. Which of you is goin' to take care of Josh Tapper?"

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The father of the flock, Cal Kimlin, was a wrestler, gouger and biter of such fame that he was excused from gun-play. The eldest son, Titus, was rather too lazy to do his duty than too scrupulous to shed blood. He motioned with his knife and growled:

"It's Enoch's turn. I burned Pete Tapper's barn las' spring."

"My turn, nothin'," Enoch snarled back. "Didn't I and Katie plug Hank Tapper and his brother Keat las' fall?" He laughed proudly: "'Member how Katie and me played a game on him? Katie screamin' 'Help—murder—help!' down the lane an' 'en when them two Tappers come runnin' to save her, didn't I plunk Hank, and didn't Katie pick off Keat's left ear as neat as a doctor could've did it?"

Katie whooped with pride till she had to hide her face under her apron. When her cavernous laugh ended, Enoch turned to Joel, the youngest of the family, and said:

"I reckon it's about time Joel done somethin' for the honor of the fambly. Even the womenfolks is ahead of you."

Joel squirmed none the less when Gran'maw turned to him with pride.

"Tha's right, Joel boy. Now's your chanst to make your poor old gran'maw proud of you."

Joel did not leap at the chance. He frowned and slid about his chair until his grandmother sighed:

"Aw, Joel, Joel boy, are you a Haydock like me, or one of them blue-bellied Kimlins your ma married into?"

Still the boy did not rise to the clear call of duty. He made an evasion:

"I aint never even seen Josh Tapper. I got nothin' against him."

Gran'maw gasped: "What! Nothin' against the man who killed your cousin Linus for you!"

"But cousin Linus aint dead yet; and besides, he was gougin' Josh's eyes out."

"What's that got to do with it?"

Gran'maw sniffled with grief for Linus, but more for Joel. Titus misdoubted that the dew which bepearled the tip of her nose was a tear. He reached out a hand like a bear's paw and cuffed her sharp shoulder-blades consolingly as he muttered:

"Don't you take on now, Gran'maw. Send Katie out to plug him, sence Joel's such a Sunday-schooler."

"Gimme your gun, baby," said Katie. "Come on, give mamma its gun."

This was shame unbearable, and Joel snapped:

"Aw, hell, I'll shoot him if you gotta have him shot."

Gran'maw threw her arms about him and gave him a disconcerting kiss as she fluttered:

"That's my Joel boy; that's Gran'maw's honey now. If you hurry, you'll most likely ketch him comin' up the lane on his way home."

To sanctify the deed and the weapon, she ran and fetched Joel's rifle and laid it in his hands with her blessing.

Joel marched away with the reluctance of a drafted soldier dubious of the sacredness of the cause. With his rifle across his left arm, he plodded as sullenly as if he were sent to the well for water, instead of to the thicket for a human life.

THE mountains were to blame for the spirit of the Kimlins and Tappers—that is, if mountains are to be credited with majesty, and with messages and heroic influences, they must shoulder the responsibility for the sins of their children.

The cruel ridges of Kentucky and Tennessee, like the Albanian crags, have been celebrated for the harshness they inspire with their walls of rock, their partitions and their ready ambushes. But the Kimlins dwelt in the great wrinkles of the earth that flow across from Massachusetts into New York.

Originally they were of good British stock, and respectable enough until the thriftier Dutch outtraded them and edged them for livelihood over into hunting and trapping, tree-felling, charcoal burning and other hillside trades. They grew to resemble the Indians whom the same conditions persuaded to the same crudities. Some of the early Kimlins, indeed, married into the Mohegan tribe whose wigwams were spread among their cabins.

This generation of Kimlins worked, when it worked, at the making of barrel-hoops from alder saplings, shaving them down until they could be bent around a barrel, and notching their ends so that they could be locked together. The cooperages of the region bought this handiwork at prices that hardly kept the mountaineers in the whisky which was more satisfying than such food as they could buy or kill.

During the dreadful winters, they peeled off alder bark and sold it to a medicine company. They raised chickens and stole them from one another. The women made butter and stole eggs from the chickens. And the men cut a little hay to sell down the valley or stuff into their own barns and later into their cattle.

HERE, as in all realms of countryside, bitter passions smoldered and blazed into fearful crimes that gained little advertisement since there were neither newspapers nor story-tellers to blazon them about. The traveler on foot, by horse or motor, saw peaceful folk toiling in the fields or resting on the doorsteps of their humble, therefore virtuous homes, and envied them the sweet simplicity of bucolic lives so innocent of the evils of the cities.

The life was indeed simple, but not so sweet: an alternation of simple envy and simple greed, simple jealousy and desire, lust and laziness, hate and punishment by simple battle or assassination.

The lives of the young were like the lives of other cubs; their parents taught them ferocity and fondled them, or ruined them with brutality. The great world paid no heed to their sufferings or their sins. Their characters and their lives, like their scenery, were as noble as landscape, since ruggedness and violence are picturesque when they break through levels of serenity and sweeping slopes of grace. And wild flowers have a peculiar beauty from being wild and from bestarring the dreariest places.

The beauty of this scene moved Joel no more than it moved the old dog that heeled him through the woods, pausing now and then to sit down and kick off into space some of the products of the flea-incubator he conducted.

Joel cast his eyes about him as warily as a bird that never takes a sip of water or picks up a seed without a glance about.

Studying the horizon for the silhouettes of possible enemies, he sidled round every turn of the road, and when he entered the thicket, assumed that every tree hid a foeman with a rifle at the ready.

He moved slowly, trampling sleeping flowers to death and kicking aside a rattlesnake that whirred and struck vain fangs against his heavy boot. He found at last a jutting point that commanded the road. A dead log there served for a rifle-rest. It served also for a bolster, and Joel had not lain there long before he grew drowsy from the very drain of emotions. He winced from the cold, and he cursed Josh Tapper for the delay, but his chief trouble was the amazing heaviness of his eyelids.

He made his dog lie down and keep quiet. The strained expectancy of his nerves exhausted him. His head dropped lower and lower; at last it was pillowed on the arm that dangled over the log alongside the barrel of the rifle.

He slept. And the angel of scorn, float-

ing through the woods like an invisible vapor, found him and dispossessed his unresisting soul.

Where the evicted Joel went, who can know? Whether he sped as a belated guest into a vast cathedral innumerably peopled, or flowed as a brook that spills across a cliff into a sea; whether he there met Niobe's banished soul and talked to it, or mingled with it as all the brooks are mixed together in all the seas and drawn up into the clouds to be rained down in far-off places again and again driven to the sea and again to the clouds and down and up again, again, again—who can know?

In any case the angel, finding the body empty, entered it and found himself in a suit of flesh too tight for comfort. As he tried to fit himself into the frame of Joel, he touched many unsuspected buttons, and pulled various strings that made Joel's body twitch and filled his sleep with nightmares of incredible contradiction.

And then the angel slept awhile for rest against the hour when he should waken to his new existence and assume the burden not only of Joel's body but of all the countless ancestors that had contributed to it their faults and impulses, their mechanisms and desires.

Chapter Three

THE first that the angel who became Niobe Fenn knew of its new office and offices was the thrill of cold. An early morning breeze, running ahead of the dawn and at the heels of night's last black hour, attacked the outmost sheath of the sleeping form. Between angelhood and womanhood had fallen a long mystery of sleep, wherein the new soul was not entirely quiet but stupefied, like an infant about to be born, shivering with premonitions of an utter change.

Then the usurped body began to shudder; the pores of the skin, tiny minute innumerable windows, were closing, or trying to, against the invading chill. Distress grew acute wherever the silken skin was exposed. Patches of flesh sought and found muscles and nerve-centers of their own which fluttered them with a faint local motion such as horses still preserve.

The arm under Niobe's head felt its blood-streams strangled. Its nerves made a tingling protest. The bent right leg wailed with cramp. The eyes complained of the tickling of the hair stretched across them.

Still the unrest of the awakening city did not reach the governor of it. At last a sneeze shook that city with a little private earthquake and shook off a bit of the soul-smother of sleep. The higher consciousness that we call the mind still slept, but the executive elements stirred and set in motion an elaborate and marvelous series of concatenated actions, as amazing and as familiar as the sending of a telegram.

The body, by the long tuition of habit, looked after itself in its drowsiness with the unintelligent instincts of a beast in a lair. An arm went out groping for help. The legs drew closer to the torso to diminish the exposed surfaces from which the heat of the internal furnaces wasted.

Then, still unawake, one hand, like the first yawning servant that begins the life of a household, felt about till it found the edge of the covers where the maid had folded them slantwise. The experienced hand drew back the silk and wool and linen and made an entrance.

As a mole burrows and squirms into the earth, the blind body of Niobe slid and wriggled and crept into the nest of the cold sheets, shivered again at their sharp touch. The linen accepted her warmth quickly and kept it, and with a sigh of welfare the new Niobe slept again.

Inside the motionless body there was as much activity as beneath a somnolent volcano. The heart pumped the blood into the softly fanning lungs, presented it to the air to purify, then sent it all about the city. Food was being transported, broken up, corrected, absorbed, rejected. In that still woman the night life and the morning life of a metropolis were conducted as by milkmen, trainmen, firemen, scavengers. Organs of inconceivable complexity and ingenuity whose very names Niobe had never heard and of whose existence she was unaware, were manufacturing acids and alkalies, distilling alcohols, reagents of every sort, and conducting on the night-shift a factory more marvelous than any steel-mill.

Niobe had thought little of these things, except as they had kept her wakeful or fitful or reposeful, but they troubled the angel exceedingly, for the angel was like a simple foreign peasant suddenly thrust from a trans-atlantic ship into the heart of Broadway. The angel was astounded, amazed, ignorant. It wondered how human beings managed at all. And then the traffic took it and carried it like a ticketed immigrant to a life of toil where choice was rare and painful.

Increasingly the city demanded the attention of its governing mind. Tissues of muscles, cured of the poisons of fatigue, cried for action. Outside the palace window a mob of desperate unemployed clamored to the queen to appear and rule. Niobe was waking. The light on her eyelids grew insistent. Birds outside chirped, and the chirps beat on her ears like tack-hammers. Her eyelids lifted and fell again as a sun-shaft whipped them.

She turned her head. The eye called an arm up for shelter. The obedient arm rose above her head and fell across the brow with grateful shadow. But it grew cold in the morning wind that flaunted the curtains. The arm withdrew again to the warmth within and caught a blanket over a bare shoulder. The eyes complained of the neglect of the arm, the arm of the selfishness of the eyes.

Mutinies in all parts rose to sedition. The heart quickened; the arteries leaped. The lungs took greater gulps of air. Niobe stirred throughout; an army was waking at a bugle of reveille. The sentinels of night were impatient to be relieved.

The eyes opened and stared about the room. Strange at first to the angel, as it always had been to the wakening Niobe, the chamber soon grew familiar as the same objects fell upon the same centers of memory.

Being young and strong, in spite of certain dangerous weaknesses inherited or acquired, Niobe generally woke with a glad languor, and debated with a gluttony of life between the voluptuousness of sleep and the rapture of leaping forth into the world.

A hand went out to pull the little cord that quenched the bed-lamp she had forgotten to put out the night before. Then, as of wont, the hand traveled to a button and pressed it.

ALMOST at once a door opened. A maid in cap and apron entered, glanced at the bed, said the old formula, "Good morning!" with an amiable sincerity and affection, then went into another room while the angel in Niobe watched, a little puzzled. From the unseen apartment was audible a sound of faucets turning, of water gushing and splashing. The sound had influence; it called, commanded.

The maid appeared again, bustled about, put windows down, set a fire alight under the mantel, went to another door, opened it and took from it slippers and a robe. She set the slippers by the bedside and laid the robe across. Then she went to the door that had admitted her, slipped through and closed it with a softness like a deference.



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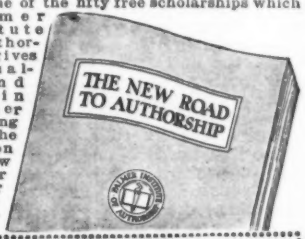
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Niobe wondered at all this as at a new thing, yet an old thing that had happened to her in another life, long, long ago.

Imperious compulsions within urged her to rise. Some power got her to the edge of her bed. Her feet, like retrievers, nosed out the slippers, then entered them. A hand went forth unordered, caught the robe and drew it behind her. Her arms went back and up in curious motions like wings until at last the robe fell about her, adding rich color to the sculpture of her pink ivory. Strange powers lifted her, balanced her cunningly, carried one foot ahead, then the other past that, and so transported her across the room by magic to a room all tile and marble. It was white, white, with many conveniences.

A huge basin was filling with hot and seething water. Her hand, as if schooled by experience, turned the faucets. The water ceased to flow.

She stepped high over the porcelain ledge into the pool. It was beautifully warm, soothing. It gathered about her in a garment of ineffable flexibility.

Her twisted hair touched the water and the wet ends annoyed her shoulders. She tucked it up into itself.

She stretched herself and lay indolent, feeling herself a wonderful thing in a paradise of well-being. Her body was glowing and chanting with life, and the water about her seemed to be her native element.

She heard the door open in the other room. Primeval alarm frightened her. She hid in the water and peered across the sill of the tub. The maid had returned. She carried a tray that steamed. She went near the bed and then left the room again without the tray.

The bewildered mermaid felt that she had had enough of it, and stepped out of the tub onto the soft mat. She was freed of the drugs of sleep, of indifference. She was alive, eager, able to conquer the world or the skies.

Before her were fabrics laid out for evident purposes that did not have to be explained. Intuitions guided her; her muscles completed their tasks like well-trained servants, leaving her spirit at large. She drew stockings to her knees. A garment of silk with holes for head and arms and legs lay before her. She clambered into it, and her mirror told her that the Greek nymph had become a French coquette. She went back into her robe as into a toga and added years of dignity to herself. She marched with a certain grandeur back to the other room.

ON the table by her bed she found a little feast. A savor of coffee fumed from a silver spout, an incense from a brown lumber of toast in a silver rack. China dishes with silver covers gleamed among silver tools; cupped spoons, tined forks, dull-edged knives of silver, little vessels full of salt and pepper, cream, and sugar powdered and in hard cubes. It was wonderful how elaborately this private banquet was submitted to her.

She sat down and poured black hot coffee, sweetened it, spilled clotted cream into it, and sipped. It added new assurance to her sublimity. She nibbled at bread and eggs of gold and ivory with rejoicing.

A folded thing which she somehow recognized as a newspaper caught her eye. Across the pages ran great legends full of horror and terror, with frightening words, brief and melodramatic. Somebody "bared" a fraud or "flayed" something, or shot, or was shot, or stole or died or was buried, divorced, sued, jailed—everything was a matter of shame, woe or terror.

But all of these unfortunates were remote, and their horror was nil to her. She flung the paper asunder, split it in the middle with great sweeps of her arms, turning this page and that noisily till she reached a page reeking with the word "society." Here the deeds were less dreadful. Somebody merely went to Europe or Florida, or came back thence. Somebody married or was going to get married, or had a child or gave a reception or had a portrait painted.

SOME of the names of these people awoke the mysteries of memory, brought back faces, words, deeds, made them interesting. Her eyes gaped and her teeth paused as she was about to close her pretty white fangs on a bit of toast gilded with marmalade.

The paragraph stated that Clyde Whitham had married Elsie Malvern. It was as if daggers had smitten her through the left breast. The miracle of memory stirred. She recalled Clyde Whitham as one who had implored her for love, had implored for years and with tears. She had laughed in his scarlet and white face. He had threatened to kill himself. She laughed at this memory, and a cynic inside her whispered:

"He has chosen the slowest form of suicide—marriage."

Then the laughter fainted from her lips. She felt a bitter rancor toward the girl Elsie, like a bad taste in her heart, a nausea of the soul. The primeval contempt of female for female made her snarl. Her fangs were not so pretty as she bared them and thought:

"The rotter! So she got him. If Clyde only knew what I know about her! Well, there's some more fodder for the divorce-court!"

She ate furiously a moment as if her consuming wrath had need of more fuel. Now she read that DeWitt Stephens had been divorced by Cordelia his wife.

This filled her heart with sorrow. Her taut, upcurled lips softened, and a gentleness gathered about her eyes. She felt a stone in her heart, an ache of pity. Another romance gone to smash! DeWitt and his Cordelia had loved each other as sweetly as Daphnis and Chloe. They always had meant to marry, and neither had been able to flirt with another soul from childhood.

But for all their familiarity, there had been some mystery which life together had dissolved. And poor Cordelia needed mystery as much as a flabby figure needs corsets.

Niobe, with a grim philosophy, spoke to herself in the silence of her soul:

"I'll never let a man know me too well. Mother had the right idea. She kept Father guessing and waiting. He thought he had conquered her, but he never did. He never would divorce her because she made him wonder. There was always a part of her he couldn't learn about."

The ancient cynic crumbled into a helpless, lonely girl, wailing aloud:

"Mamma, Mamma! Help me! I want Bret, but I'm afraid to lose him if I marry him."

The angel that was Niobe Fenn went blind suddenly. Something welled over the eyes and removed the room, the sunlit windows, the glittering silver from the vision. Something slid down the cheeks and trickled over the lips, something that tasted like the salt in the silver holder, something unendurably bitter yet strangely sweet.

This, the most daring and original novel published in years, develops with cumulative power in the succeeding chapters. Be sure to read the next installment—in our forthcoming October issue.

D I X I E

(Continued from page 66)

aware of the full extent of the fortune within her grasp. Her eyes were caught and held by that crisp, green blanket of Midas. Truly, money talks, and it spoke to Mittie Sue in terms that brought the hunger into her eyes and set her lips to trembling. She rallied quickly, almost hysterically, sweeping the temptation from the table, and hurrying into the comforting arms of her father.

"Suit yourself," said Dexter, gathering up the money and replacing it in a leather bag. "I'll just leave this bill-of-sale on the table in case you care to think it over. Night, folks."

For an hour afterward Mittie Sue strove to reassure her father. For an amateur actress she did not do so badly. Judge Roberts let her think she was deceiving him until she made some excuse to go to her room. Then his expression changed. He had seen the truth just as clearly as though he had been sitting in his courtroom listening to an inexperienced witness commit perjury in his behalf. He tiptoed across the floor, noiselessly opened the door of his daughter's room and peered in. The girl lay prone on the bed, sobbing quietly into her pillow.

Judge Roberts returned to the sitting-room, and for the first time looked at life through the eyes of his daughter. In vain he sought to defend himself before the bar of his own conscience. Late at night, a final plea of "Guilty, Your Honor!" was wrung from his anguished lips, and he pronounced his own sentence by writing "*Jeffrey Roberts*" at the bottom of the bill-of-sale that Dexter had so thoughtfully left on the table.

MITTIE SUE went away on a visit to the Bosworths, believing happily that everything had been made possible by Colonel Benton Williams, a blood relative, who, it developed, had written from Mexico after a silence of twenty years.

The Judge had been trifling with the truth so long that he was now an adept at the gentle art of romancing. "You' ve'y fou'th cousin, Mittie," said the Judge impressively. "I grubstaked him, and he's struck it ve'y rich. We'll have eve'ything we want now."

"Even to buying back all our holdings?" inquired Mittie.

"Well," coughed the Judge, "not just yet, but at the propah time! Come now, kiss you' fathah, and tell him how happy you are!"

Judge Roberts said good-by to his daughter, resplendent in the first modern gown she had ever worn. Never had she appeared so much like her mother as at this moment when she was slipping from his grasp, just as his wife had done when Death removed the gentle woman he had so worshiped. Just before the train pulled out, Johnny Sheridan presented his farewell gift, purchased at Latonia with a luck-piece he had treasured many years.

"Don't forget your racing tack'!" he laughed, handing up a fully equipped vanity box. "Whip, spurs, an' everything! S'long, Sis—hope you knock 'em dead!"

He kept up his bantering until the last minute. But when he was riding home with the Judge, it was a different story. They looked into each other's eyes and understood.

"Well, son," said the Judge, "you've been a mighty fine supe'intendent, but I suppose you realize—"

"Ye-ah," said Johnny slowly, "I understand. When are you going to turn her over?"

"Dexter is shipping to Belmont Park tomorrow. You will oblige me, suh, by making delive'y in the mo'ning after I have left —fo'—town. Don't think I could bear to see—"

"I get you, Judge. You didn't include me in the deal, did you? Where do I stand?"

"Son," said the Kentuckian, "Willowbrook is yo' home as long as you ca'e to remain. I have learned to love you, but you are a free agent, suh! I have no use now for a track supe'intendent."

"Well, Judge," said Johnny Sheridan, "suppose you just let me keep the title. I've kinda grown accustomed to it."

HARD as it had been for the Judge to say good-by to his daughter, his farewell to Dixie that night plumbed the depths of his desolation. The sensitive filly knew that something was wrong—sensed it through animal magnetism conveyed in his trembling caresses, recognized the anguish in his tones.

"You wont fo'get the lyin' ol' fool who called you into life," he sobbed. "Do yo' best, my dea', even if it's not in the colo's of the man who bred you!" He broke down, burying his face against the velvet of his sweetheart's throat.

Almost at the same moment Johnny Sheridan in the seclusion of his room had made up his mind regarding his course of action. The boy had received an object-lesson in self-sacrifice. His easy philosophy was shattered by the realization of his own wasted years.

He bowed his head a moment, and then stood up, mechanically touching his finger to his forehead, the way a jockey salutes the presiding judge. The next afternoon he was en route to Belmont Park, riding the brake-beams on the same train that bore Dixie away from her birthplace.

Judge Roberts had now lost his daughter, his horse and his track superintendent. He even lost the major portion of Dixie's purchase price. The money had been advanced to Dexter by the very bank which represented all the Judge's creditors. With the exception of the money he had given Mittie Sue for her immediate needs, the balance was attached as soon as it had been deposited.

These repeated blows told on the old Kentuckian. He spent more time than ever in the hotel bar, seeking solace from his favorite beverage. Men to whom he applied his formula for establishing relationship turned their backs on him while he was still talking. More than once, to his indignation, he found himself asking the colored porter whether he was "*the* Herbert Johnson, whose mother was a Virginia Lee, third cousin of the speaker!"

Some surviving sense of propriety bade him retire from the bench that he had so long adorned. He had now nothing to live for save the letters that came from Mittie Sue, and in order that these might not lose their happy flavor, he sold his few remaining belongings, including Willowbrook itself. He sent the money to his daughter with pompous allusions to Colonel Benton Williams' successful enterprises in Mexico.

Johnny Sheridan telegraphed him from Belmont Park: "Hock the family jewels and back Dixie in first start."

But the Judge had no family jewels, which was just as well, since Dixie, the most temperamental little filly that ever lived, ran out of the money in her first start, and thereafter developed into the worst "bad actor" in the history of the American turf. Babied and petted all her life in the quiet seclusion of Willowbrook, the daughter of Southern Melody had never known the touch of strange hands, much less of whip. If ever there was a product



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of love, it was she, and every particle of equine intelligence rebelled against being separated from the "lyin' ol' fool" who had reared her. She wanted the dilapidated old stall at home with its familiar odors. She yearned for the kinky-headed little Pockets, the ragged farmhands who fed her apples, and the Dancing Kid, with whom she had argued good-naturedly. In the absence of all these, in the presence of strange, unsympathetic Northerners, Dixie became hysterical, and then, under punishment, vicious and finally *crazy!*

At the post she broke the barrier repeatedly, threw the assistant starters right and left, unseated her jockey five times, and drew down the apoplectic wrath of the starter.

"I'll kiss that filly good-by forever," he yelled. "I aint gonna have my men killed for no lousy she-devil. You hear me, Dexter? She's barred from now on!"

"Aw, listen," pleaded Dexter. "I'll bring her to time, Bill. Give me a chance. She's valuable."

"No, she aint!" shouted the starter. "She aint worth a plugged nickel on any track where I'm lining 'em up. Take her away and don't bring her back until you can lead her around with a silk thread."

Dexter had small chance of leading Dixie around with a silk thread, but he was the type of man who must either rule or ruin. He did his worst, employing chains and a twitch-stick, with a rope twisted around dainty nostrils, shutting off the filly's breath. When he had tired her out, he sent her a mile and half, with a big boy and forty pounds of lead in the saddle. That was the morning that Johnny Sheridan tried to kill Dexter, and was escorted out of Belmont Park by the track police.

Of all these things old Judge Roberts was unaware. He had looked in vain for some published account of Dixie's victories, but the racing papers contained no mention of the "most glorious filly ever bred." Not even the shadow of a dream remained to the shabby, broken figure that swayed, wineglass in hand, at the Robertsville bar.

LATE one afternoon many months after Judge Roberts had handed down his decision, some one tapped him on the shoulder as he leaned against the polished mahogany, and a voice spoke into his ear:

"Beg pardon, Judge—my name is Sheridan, and I want you to meet an old friend who needs your attention."

"She'idan?" mumbled the Judge. "She'idan? Are you the She'idan whose mother—" Then he looked up, and identified the tired youth standing before him.

"Dixie's outside," said the Kid. "I bought her back for a thousand bucks. Don't ask where I got the dough. Aint in very good shape, either of us—but we're here, and that's the main thing. Lot of work ahead of you, Judge."

The dazed Kentuckian, still gripping an empty glass, followed young Sheridan to the sidewalk. A blanketed filly stood at the curb—a filly that neighed shrilly as she recognized a familiar figure. Dixie nosed forward, limping on bandaged legs.

The shattered fragments of a glass tinkled in the gutter. Careless of gaping bystanders, the Judge reeled forward to throw his arms around his sweetheart's neck. "Dixie!" he sobbed. "Dixie, my dea'! Is it really you?"

POVERTY ROW exists on all race-tracks. It is the most colorful, most amusing and at the same time the most pathetic feature of the sport of kings. It is usually a long line of cheap stalls, set against the back fence and providing accommodations for veteran horsemen who are down on their luck. Here lives many a quaint character of the turf equipped with his halter, his frying-pan and his one horse. His hope is constant and his failures frequent. Poverty Row swarms with barnyard mascots that not infrequently disappear under suspicious circumstances leading to bitter warfare among rival cooks. Poverty Row begs, borrows and steals whatever is necessary for the existence of horse and man.

In this last refuge of the horseman at Latonia Park, Johnny Sheridan established old Judge Roberts, Pockets Jackson and the limping daughter of Southern Melody.

"Get her in shape for the Eclipse, Judge," he encouraged. "I'll hustle a living for all of us." And "hustle" he did, in ways of which he was past master. Johnny loved Poverty Row because it gave him a fresh laugh every minute. But old Judge Roberts was bewildered. He made an extraordinary figure, with his suave dignity and polished manners, acknowledging all introductions with his persistent formula: "Are you the Matthew Lee whose father—"

Doc' Adams, track veterinarian, agreed to apply the firing-iron to Dixie's damaged tendon, but at the last moment Judge Roberts interfered. "Cain't stand it, suh! Might as well bu'n my own hea't. Put those irons away, suh! Powe'fully obliged fo' yo' kindness, but reckon I'll have to try some othe' plan."

Daddy Brown, saddle-maker, who had once cured the great St. Ivan of just such a difficulty, showed them how to apply wet silk under dry cotton bandages, and gave them a special liniment.

"Don't be afraid to work her," said Daddy. "With them bandages on, she'll run out of the soreness."

Dixie seemed to realize what was now expected of her. Never did a filly try so earnestly to make amends for her showing in New York. She became a manger glutton, striving to put on all the weight she had lost, and Pockets Jackson became an adept at stealing oats from rival bins.

Then came the great day of days for old Judge Roberts, the running of the rich Eclipse Stakes, when all Kentucky turns out to see whether the two-year-old racing prodigies of the spring have withstood the hard knocks of training and can measure up to the real test of endurance when the leaves begin to fall.

SURROUNDED by luxury and a myriad of pleasures, Mittie Sue had been living in a world that was like a painted bubble, and it vanished overnight under the pressure of a pin-prick administered by no less a personage than Colonel Benton Williams himself, whom the girl met at a reception. The good Colonel, rotund and apoplectic, was poorer now than when Judge Roberts had staked him to go into South America on a mining enterprise when both were young. He lived by inducing people to invest in "magnificent enterprises," and he was on the point of trying to interest Mittie Sue in a pet project, when the girl discovered his identity. Here was the man responsible for all her happiness! Colonel Williams listened with profound amazement to Mittie's innocent version of what had happened.

"My dear child," he protested, "next to myself, your distinguished father is the biggest liar on earth. I haven't seen or heard from him in thirty years!"

The scales fell from the girl's eyes. Mentally she pieced together a pattern of circumstances, the significance of which dawned on her for the first time. If those loving, happy letters from her father, inclosing repeated checks, were pure deceptions, where had the money come from? What was it Judge Roberts was concealing? Why had he, for one reason after another, urged her to remain in New York when she wanted to return home?

That night the girl took the train for Robertsville, refusing hysterically to listen

to Mrs. Bosworth, who had made all arrangements for a fortnight in London. She found Willowbrook abandoned, her father's place in the courtroom occupied by his successor. From Major Collender, president of the Robertsville Bank, she learned the truth.

"I'm sorry, Miss Roberts," the banker told her, "but your father went completely to pieces. If you have friends in New York, I should advise—"

The girl, white of face, shook her head. "My place is at his side. Where is he?"

Major Collender nodded sympathetically. "I understand the Judge has a horse running today in the Eclipse. My wife and I are driving to Latonia this morning. We would be glad to have you accompany us."

IN all the color and confusion of historic Latonia, no more picturesque characters could be found than old Judge Roberts and Johnny Sheridan. Each had reached the epic point in a very human drama of the Kentucky turf. The veteran jurist was realizing his lifelong dream, and not even the unexpected arrival of Mittie Sue, pleading for explanations, could disturb the even serenity of his composure. This was *his* day and he knew it.

"Ca'm yo'se'f, my dea'. I'll explain eve'ything at the propah time. Dixie's in shape, Mittie Sue, and that's all that's necessa'y. Powe'ful nice day! Come, daughter, our place is in the Robe'ts box. Dammit, where's that supe'intendent o' mine?"

But Johnny Sheridan had no time to waste on anybody now. He was leaving it to old Judge Roberts to strut around and take all the bows. This was the Dancing Kid's busy day, and he was making every second count. Aided by the same ragged followers who had deserted him at Willowbrook, and later helped him buy back Dixie, young Sheridan was preparing for the killing of his life. Decked out impressively in "glad rags" and posing as the betting commissioner for a New York syndicate, the Kid, aided by every tout on the track, was trying to gather a following in the betting-ring. With the help of God and a dope-book, Johnny Sheridan picked the first three winners, so that by the time the bugle called up the field for the Eclipse Stakes, he had a fistful of currency, and a hundred excited clients were tramping at his heels. That was how the plunge developed on Dixie, a plunge that cut the odds from twenty-five to one down to eight, and astonished the betting-ring which thought the race was at the mercy of the great colt Cedric.

Judge Roberts had no longer any right to the box which he insisted upon occupying, but the ushers knew him, and were disposed to make allowances. Later the real owner of the inclosure put in an appearance. Peter Bosworth, returning from Mexico for the race, hesitated at the entrance to the box. He was really a decent sort, and he had no desire to humiliate anyone. His dilemma was solved when the Judge, turning around, recognized him.

"Come into my box, suh!" he bowed. "Powe'ful glad to see you again!"

Bosworth accepted smilingly. "Surprised to find you here," he told Mittie Sue. "Thought you and Mrs. Bosworth were running over to London. Had a letter to that effect."

"Wanted to see the race," Mittie explained lightly. "Mrs. Bosworth crossed with Lady Appleton."

Bosworth turned to the Judge. "Isn't that just like a woman?" he sighed. "My wife wanted a Kentucky farm and a winner of the Eclipse; I spend a fortune to get both, and now she doesn't want 'em."

"A winner of the Eclipse?" questioned the Judge. "You are mistaken in yo' assumption, suh."

"Well, if I am," Bosworth answered, "somebody's going to catch hell! I let Dexter talk me into paying seventy thousand for Cedric; I gave fifty thousand for your horse, and she turned out to be a flivver."

"You paid only ten thousand for Dixie," corrected the Judge. "Dexter counted out the money befo'e the eyes of my daughter."

Bosworth whistled reflectively. He began to get a true angle on the man to whom he had left all his racing interests. This was made more evident still when he heard the Judge's story of how Dixie had been abused, barred from the New York tracks as a "bad actor," and then had been rebuilt by those who loved her.

"She will lead her field under the wire, suh!" predicted Judge Roberts. "Greatest filly that eve' faced a sta'ter!"

"Well," said Bosworth, "I've laid twenty thousand on Cedric, so I can't pull for you. But I hope she comes in *second*. Carrying much of your money, Judge?"

"All that she ca'ies, suh, is one hundred and eighteen pounds and a gentleman's hono'!"

Bosworth's face softened. Here was a real love-story of the turf. He felt ashamed of the way he had intruded on this game, seeking by the mere expenditure of money to capture from real horsemen what they had dedicated their lives to obtain.

"Don't know," he muttered, "but what I'll pull in against my horse yet."

THE JUDGE went to the paddock to help saddle Dixie, to take final conference with the Dancing Kid, and listen to the latter's instructions to Pockets Jackson. The filly was trembling in every delicate vein and muscle, and ruby lights flamed in her eyes.

Mittie Sue remained in the box, talking to Bosworth, who learned from the girl's lips further details of Judge Roberts' lifelong dream and hopes.

It was a gallant field that paraded to the post under the acclaim of all Kentucky. Cedric led the way, guided by Archie Beldon, who had been brought from New York especially for the race; Dixie came last, her delicate legs bandaged heavily. She was a perfect example of the Kentucky thoroughbred, dancing on her tiptoes in the sunlight with exquisite grace. The great crowd gave her an ovation. Here was a Southern horse on Southern soil, carrying Southern colors, and this was Kentucky, land of memory and sentiment. They might not think she had a chance, but they were pulling for her just the same.

Pockets, in his faded silk jacket, fastened with safety-pins, formed a sad contrast to his white rivals; and truth to tell, he was suffering from stage fright in its worst form. He had never seen a crowd like that before, never had ridden in a real race; and he was scared almost white. His teeth were chattering, and he almost fell off his horse when the starter yelled at him: "Keep that filly in her place, or I'll cut your little black throat!"

"Yas suh, b-boss!" he s t a m m e r e d. "W-which way is her place?"

Only the fact that Miss Percy Johnson, gorgeous in borrowed finery, wormed her way to the rail and vociferously lent courage to her sweetheart, saved the situation.

"Do yo' stuff, man!" she shrilled. "Take yo' choice right now between a weddin' and a funeral! Foah bits says we is gwine to git married."

She held up a rabbit foot and a four-leaf clover, waving them frantically. The little negro took heart, maneuvering the filly into place with the skill of a born horseman. It was well that he settled down, for alongside of him was Bat Davis astride Cedric's running-companion St. Alwyn. The latter had a fair chance, but he was put in there by Dexter principally to

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The men and women whose friendship you enjoy longest are those who have seen, done and felt the most. They had not been satisfied with inertia and the smug home content of a wooden Indian in his niche. They had not vegetated, but had *grown* in spirit, in knowledge and understanding. And whenever they came home they brought new riches, new beauty, into all the life around them.

act as interference for Cedric, who was on the rail. Bat Davis was determined to cause as much trouble for the others as he could. He bumped Dixie out of position twice, and once raked her trembling flanks with his spurs, causing her to jump back and draw a whip-lashing from the assistant starter. The old terror returned to Dixie, and Pockets had difficulty in reassuring her. The distraction served to banish his last vestige of nervousness. He became a dark-hued dynamo, sensible of nothing but the starter's voice:

"Easy, boys! Come up, Number Nine. Get out of the tangle, Willie. Get out of it! Quiet 'em down now! Pull up on Number Five. Look out, Beldon. Come over here. . . . . All right. *Take 'em away!*"

Just as the barrier went up, Bat Davis swerved his horse sharply. Dixie was knocked to her knees. The Roberts filly recovered sharply and leaped into her stride, but the damage was done. Cedric was out in front setting a terrific pace, the others following close behind. Dixie was last, and apparently out of condition.

In the grandstand Judge Roberts, white and speechless, raised trembling hands to his lips.

"Tough luck!" muttered Bosworth. "Well, what's your loss is my gain. Looks like Dexter was right when he told me Cedric was unbeatable. Sorry, Judge. I'd like to have seen what the filly could do."

The interest of the crowd was now centered on the flying Cedric. Bat Davis was hustling St. Alwyn into forward contention, so as to be in a position when they entered the stretch to bear out on any horse that challenged his running-companion. In the excitement of watching the duel among the leaders, no one but those who had wagered on Dixie saw the Roberts colors gradually closing the gap that separated them from the field.

Pockets, the only apprentice boy in the race, was giving the daughter of Southern Melody a perfect ride, timing her speed so intelligently that she was recovering ground without using up the necessary reserve that she would need in the stretch. A boy with less natural instinct for horseflesh would have hurried her. One after another she picked them up. She was seventh—sixth—fifth! Then the crowd recognized that she was back in contention, and the roar of triumphant Kentucky assailed the sky.

BAT DAVIS looked back and saw the new challenger. Just as they made the last turn, he bore out, striving to carry Dixie to the outside of the track. But Pockets Jackson was now alert. The colored boy veered sharply to the left, avoiding interference, and gaining ground by the maneuver. Third now, and six lengths behind the leaders, Pockets Jackson settled down to business, calling on Dixie in language that only a colored boy and a Kentucky thoroughbred can understand. The filly challenged St. Alwyn, shook him off, and ranged alongside the flying Cedric. Then the effort told, and for a moment she "hung," and it seemed to her owner that she was going to fail him. Down by the rail, Johnny Sheridan and all the cronies of Poverty Row were watching the duel.

"She needs help!" shouted the Dancing Kid. "Give it to her, gang! Root her home!"

They pulled valiantly, but the real rooting was done by an old Kentucky judge who had conceived this filly in the womb of a lifelong dream. Off came the old frock coat! Off sailed the wide-brimmed black hat. "Dixie!" he shrieked. "Dixie, my dea'!"

A thousand throats echoed the cry. Even Peter Bosworth, captivated by the drama and rooting against his own horse, joined in that clamorous appeal: "Dixie! Dixie! Come on, you Kentucky!"

In the last jump, breeding told—the old Maria West blood, plus the fourteenth family of influential sires. Ears flat to her delicate head, eyes rolled back, and blood-red nostrils bobbing into the lead, on came the daughter of Southern Melody to win the Eclipse Stakes and vindicate the judgment of her owner.

Enthusiastic Kentuckians swept Judge Roberts toward the winner's circle, whither Dixie was now returning to have her dainty head and shoulders framed by a floral horseshoe.

"My supe'intendent!" panted the Judge. "Dixie's trainer? Where is that rema'kable young gentleman?"

"That's what I say," echoed Bosworth. "Where is he? I'll give him Dexter's job if he wants it. That young fellow must know his business."

They had only to look up at the bandstand to see what fifty thousand people were already observing with keen delight. The band was playing "Dixie," and the Dancing Kid, equipped with the conductor's baton and cap, was going through a repertory of steps such as had never been seen outside of a Mississippi levee.

THERE is not much more to tell, except that Bosworth insisted upon being host at a "victory dinner" that night, and he announced his intention of retiring from the turf. "These gentlemen," he said, indicating Judge Roberts and Johnny Sheridan, "will not sell me Dixie, so I am going to sell them Mira Monte on whatever terms seem proper."

So when spring next smiled on Kentucky, it saw Judge Roberts' dream of a Greater Willowbrook in the process of realization. The brood-mares were again heavy-headed and dreamy-eyed, and the spirit of love was in the air. Pockets Jackson and the ebony-hued Percy were on a honeymoon. Turkey Jones was courting the new cook. Colonel Benton Williams had taken up quarters in the old Willowbrook home. And all the beaux of Robertsville, including the son of Major Collender, were besieging Mittie Sue on the lawns of Mira Monte. The only one who seemed alone was Johnny Sheridan, who felt that his mission was ended. The call of the *Wanderlust* stirred in his veins, awakened by a letter from pals at Belmont Park. He wondered if he was really needed at Willowbrook. Judge Roberts was happy. Dixie was happy. Mitty Sue *seemed* happy.

A girl who had been waiting wistfully for Johnny Sheridan to renew his courtship beheld the truant just in time. Suitcase in hand, he was heading down the lane. At her frightened cry of, "Johnny, Johnny! Where are you goin', suh?" he dropped his battered suitcase over the fence and pretended to be greatly interested in the scenery. But Mittie Sue had seen the suitcase, and it needed only a glance at his face to reveal what was in his mind. They had it out then as young people will do.

"Johnny dear," she told him, "you saw what happened to Dixie when she was separated from those she loved. Please don't go, or I'll feel worse than Dixie."

"You mean—" said the Dancing Kid.

But the meaning was written in her eyes, and there was no further need of speech. Together they turned back toward a Greater Willowbrook, more particularly toward a commodious stall where Judge Roberts was at that moment whispering tender compliments to the lady of his heart who had made all things possible.

Another of Gerald Beaumont's inimitable stories will appear in the forthcoming October issue of The Red Book Magazine.



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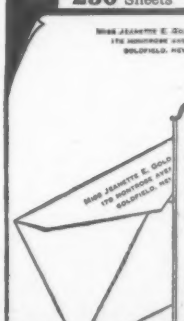
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THE VALLEY OF VOICES

(Continued from page 57)

a man down outside, who proved to be Laflamme. What he had come for I do not know."

"Was it not clear to you what he came for, monsieur?"

Steele turned, in protest, to the speaker. "I hoped I had made the situation plain, mademoiselle. He was brutal to her through dinner—jeered at and insulted the girl. He's tired of her—made no pretense of hiding it. She told me she would gladly knife him if there was a chance of getting away."

"And yet, learning she was not in the house, he went to the shack of the gallant American, to find it guarded by his faithful Indian?" The girl smiled disconcertingly. Steele was puzzled at her mood.

"Denise!" protested her father. "Will you permit Monsieur Steele to tell his story? You are not fair!"

Could it be possible that she did not believe him, Steele asked himself. But the seeming composure of Denise disarmed him, and he went on:

"David had choked Laflamme into unconsciousness, and of course we had to leave without our flour. We paddled all night, pushed up the Rouge and over to the Jackfish. We also discovered that they had taken all our rifle shells. I was sure we had distanced pursuit, but at the Frying Pan two Indians who had traveled overland were waiting for us. We didn't know they were there until we were right on the carry. Thinking we were helpless and would come ashore, they didn't fire on us until they saw we intended to run the rapids. Then one raised his rifle, but was shot by David, who had found a cartridge which Laflamme's man had overlooked."

St. Onge listened to Steele's story in amazement.

"He sent his men to kill you—keep you from getting out of the country?"

"He rightly saw that after what had happened, he couldn't afford to have us leave the bush. You see, notwithstanding my two bags of Indian stuff, he suspected me of spying on his place—and probably chose the Frying Pan as a safe means of getting rid of us."

They had left the supper-table and were in the living-room, and as Steele finished, he realized that Denise, who sat with eyes on the rug at her feet, had not been listening. Was it the old depression, he wondered, or—

"And without shells for your guns, you traveled clear to the Nepigon on short rations?" broke in St. Onge.

"Worse than that. We got but few fish, and before we reached Nepigon House, were down to one meal a day."

St. Onge shook his head. "That would have been serious if you had been caught by the ice. But Laflamme certainly met his match, monsieur, in you and David."

"David wished to do away with him before we left that night. It might have been well for you if he had; but of course a bound man, helpless—it was unthinkable."

"Yes," said Denise, looking up, "I am glad you did not allow that. I have a headache," she continued, rising. "I am very tired, monsieur. You will pardon me? Good night!" And she left the room.

That day Steele had traveled forty miles to avoid camping another night on the snow before seeing Denise St. Onge. He was tired from the hard day on the river ice, and disturbed and mystified by the mood of the factor's daughter. Her emotion on meeting him, her father's description of her joy when he carried the news to her—news which meant so much to her future—had raised him to the heights. But now her air of incredulity, the irony of her comment on his story of that night at Ogoké, sent him to his bed mortified, troubled, stung with the injustice of her attitude. It seemed so foreign to his conception of the character of Denise St. Onge, that when his tired body finally drew him into the oblivion of sleep, he had attributed her manner and her silence to the strain of overtaxed nerves.

Chapter Twenty-five

THE following morning the council of war met in the shack of Michel, where, as the Iroquois was unmarried, there would be no interruption. Steele learned that in his absence the Windigo had appeared at the Medicine Hills, where he had robbed a line of marten-traps, but owing to the fact that it was rich fur-country, some of the hunters had returned to their trap-lines after the first fear had subsided. By the time the head-man and St. Onge had arrived at the hunters' camps on the Little Medicine River, new snow had wiped out the trail. The Little Current and Drowning River Indians were on their lines, as they had not been bothered, but in the wide area of the Feather Lakes, rich in mink and otter, and for eighty miles in the valley of the Wailing, the frozen floor of the forest and muskeg lay unmarked by the webbed trail of the snowshoes, and no smoke of a hunter's lodge hung in the still air of the November mornings, a white column against the spruce.

"Now, what has Tête-Boule been doing? Did you make him talk?" demanded Steele when Michel had described the situation in the valley of streams tributary to the Wailing.

"W'en I come back, I ask Tête-Boule w'at Pierre say to heem w'en he was here. I say we know Pierre speek wid de double tongue—dat he come from Laflamme. I tak' de knife een one han' an' de t'roat of Tête-Boule een de oder. Den I say, 'You tell de trut' or I feed your tongue to de husky'."

"Did he talk?"

Michel smiled grimly. "He talk!"

"What did he say?"

"He say Pierre ask heem w'at was goin' on at de pos'. He ask w'at you doin' dere an' he talk of de Windigo scare. He ask eef you was police, an' eef you lak Mam'selle. Tête-Boule say you was Windigo-hunter."

"Did Pierre ask how long David and I had been here?"

"Yes, he ask manee t'ing."

Steele looked at David. "We didn't have a ghost of a chance to get away from Ogoké, except by accident. Laflamme had learned all about us from his spy Pierre."

"Wal, we leeve queek, for sure, but we leeve jes' de same. We geeve heem headache w'en we go, ah-hah!"

"Now, Michel," continued Steele, "I've kept my word and come back on the first snow, and I've brought a hound that will help us if we have the luck to hear that Windigo again. I've also brought these."

The speaker stripped the lashings from a canvas-covered bundle which David had carried in from the sled the night previous, to reveal to the curious eyes of Michel two massive engines of torture, their steel jaws bristling with teeth.

"By gar! Bear-trap!" exclaimed the Iroquois, black eyes glittering.

"Beauties, aren't they? God help the brute they close on!"

Then Steele lifted six smaller but no less wicked-looking devices designed to snap on and hold in viselike grip the paw of the unwary prowler which stepped in them.

Michel and David exchanged looks. Michel filled his pipe, lit it, and hastily opening the door, circled the cabin to assure himself of absolute privacy. Then he began:

"Dat ees right, m'sieur. You keep de word an' come back to fight wid us. Leesten! You t'ink de tam you meet Mam'selle below at de *rapide* dat she was alone?"

"When David and I were packing up to the post?"

"Ah-hah! Wal, Michel was dere."

"What d'you mean?" asked Steele, puzzled. "You were taking care of her?"

"Yes."

"Did she know it?"

The Iroquois shook his head. "She not know."

"What were you afraid of, so near the post?"

"Beeg Antoine!"

Steele stared in amazement at the speaker. "Big Antoine! You mean Laflamme's man—the one with the scar on his face?"

The half-breed nodded.

"What would he be doing at Wailing River?" But Steele already half guessed.

"He come once een de summer—he come wid 'noder man to tak' her to Ogoké."

"What? You mean to say that Laflamme was crazy enough to try to take her by force? Nonsense, Michel! St. Onge would have had the police at Ogoké within a month."

"Eet was crazee t'ing to try for to do—but he try eet."

"St. Onge never told me this," said the provoked American. "It explains her fear when she saw me that day."

"She nevaire know Beeg Antoine try to get her, but she have fear."

"Never knew? I don't understand, Michel."

"Eet weel scare her to go in de bush, and we not want her scare' of de bush. She lak to go on de hill an' play her feeddle—an' down to de *rapide*, also. Eef we tell her dey come once to tak' her, she nevaire go anee more tam."

Steele was touched.

"So you have always taken care of her since the visit of Big Antoine? Tell me about it."

"Eet was las' June, after dat Indian carry letter from Laflamme. He tell me Laflamme was goin' get Mam'selle, sometam. So de nex' tam she go play at de *rapide*, Michel ees dere. After long tam I hear somet'ing move een de bush. I wait an' see dis Beeg Antoine—he watch her, but she don' know; she play de feeddle. I don' wan' to scare her, so I walk on de portage wid de beeg whistle so dey hear me an' get out. I follow dem t'rough de bush, an' een little tam on de rivière 'bove de pos', see Beeg Antoine talk to 'noder feller."

MICHEL stopped, relit his pipe, and smiled tantalizingly at the interested Steele.

"For heaven's sake, go on! What did you do? Why didn't you drill them?"

Michel blew a cloud of smoke from his mouth before he answered.

"You see dees Big Antoine at Ogoké"

"Yes."

"Wal, he move hees head when I shoot. Eet was bad shot."

"So it was you who gave him that scar on his face? What happened to the other man?"

"He did not move," said the Iroquois.

"You hit him?"

"Beeg Antoine go back to Ogoké alone."

"And they never came again?"

"No, but we had fear."

"That was why St. Onge made me take a rifle to the hill, that day. You say she was never told? Still, she has suspected something of this kind might happen."

"Yes, she has fear jes' de same."

There was a hard glint in the eyes of Steele as he turned to David.

"David," he said, "I owe you another apology. When we had that snake in our hands, we should have finished the job. It would have been held self-defense by any decent jury."

David lifted his wide shoulders. "We feenish dat job sometam, boss."

Chapter Twenty-six

AS Steele had foreseen, the running down of a beast patrolling a country of the size of the Wailing River Valley was clearly a matter of chance. If they once struck a fresh trail, there was every reason to believe that men on snowshoes would, in a day or two, come up with it. And in that case the three friends had no doubt of the outcome.

But, they agreed, if this thing which made a trail peculiarly like that of a bear, though the feet were misshapen, was, in fact, a member of the species, it was nevertheless a bear of the most unusual and astounding traits and characteristics, and therefore might, if afflicted with rabies or other disease, fail to follow the ursine habit of hibernation. In that case it would wander until it starved; but the damage would have been done with no chance of proving to the Indians that their Windigo was a beast, with four feet, and no devil.

On the other hand, if it were of another species—a lynx with feet of dimensions and shape beyond the experience of both Michel and David; a cougar, or mountain lion, far from its natural habitat; a wolverine of a size beyond belief—it would roam the valley and the lake country of the Wailing, filling the nights with horror for the luckless hunters and their families.

A few weeks of this, added to the rumors from Big Feather Lake and the lower river, which were spreading up the valley, and St. Onge would wait at Christmas for the trade which would never come—the post would be dead. So the necessity for early action was imperative, and it was therefore decided that Steele and David, with the bloodhound, which they were anxious to test on the snow at once, should work over to the Medicine Hills and Phantom Lakes district, with the purpose of quieting the Indians, if possible, and holding them in the country, as well as of waiting the possible reappearance of the night wailer. Michel and Little Jacques, a French Cree sent from Albany to work at the post after the loss of the fur-canoe, and the sole Indian to volunteer for such dread duty, were to patrol the Portage Lake country as far as the trap-lines on the Little Current and the Drowning. Both parties were to report back at Wailing River in two weeks. In the meantime a jack pine at the junction of the Stooping with the main stream was chosen as the message-center to which a man from each party was to return in a week for news of the other, and whither St. Onge would send any information from the post downriver. In this manner they could cover a great area of the lower Wailing. But Steele only too well realized the magnitude of the odds he faced—the slimness of his chance of again hearing that voice in the night, or of finding the misshapen tracks of its owner.

The plan of campaign settled, with the hearty approval of St. Onge, the traps were divided between the sleds, loaded with supplies for two weeks.

BEFORE Steele started, he returned to the house. At breakfast Denise had been gracious, affable but impersonal, and Steele felt that the mood of the previous evening still possessed her. So, justly hurt, he made no attempt to plead his case or correct the impression she had patently suffered herself to nourish—the belief that he had lightly gone from her revelation of the



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secret places of her heart, that day on the beach, to a low intrigue at Ogoké—under the pretense of seeking information, had met Rose Laflamme secretly, only to escape surprise and detection by the alertness of his watchdog David. Thus the situation shaped itself in the mind of the smarting Steele; and as it ever is with the unjustly suspected, he had, with a brave show of indifference, hardened his sore heart to the suffering girl whose burden was already sufficiently great.

But her welfare demanded his early departure from the post, and the man whose thoughts she filled left her that morning without an attempt at defense or explanation.

"We are going up the river at once, mademoiselle. I want you to know, in case anything happens, any trouble, that I have done what I could."

The sober eyes of the girl grew wistful. She started as if to speak, then turned her head, while he watched the blood surge to her throat, her face, then fade. Then she said:

"You have been so good to us—are doing so much. We can never repay you. I wish you all success, monsieur, and a safe return."

That was all. Sick at heart, he turned away and joined the waiting dog-teams.

"You say Tête-Boule is away on a caribou-hunt, Colonel?" he said, joining St. Onge for a final word before starting.

"Yes, he has been away a week."

"I suggest that he be kept in the dark as to our movements, and not used as a messenger if you send us news next week."

"Why?" asked St. Onge in surprise. "He is harmless—just a busybody and enamored of his powers as a conjuror."

Steele's face hardened. "He will not be harmless if Laflamme decides to make good his threat against you. He'll talk his head off to any Indian passing here, as he did to Pierre. Do you realize that it was the information he gave Pierre about me that caused the trouble with Laflamme?"

"Yes, he did talk there, but he didn't know that Pierre came from Laflamme."

Steele turned to Michel. "How about that? What do you think?"

The head-man smiled cryptically, but was silent.

"Now, Colonel," continued Steele, "if you must keep that crazy Wabeno around here because you are short-handed, I must absolutely insist that he be told nothing about our plans or movements—that you do not intrust him with the message, if you send one; and as none of your people have seen the traps, you will not mention them."

St. Onge colored. "You seem to infer that I am not as interested in what you are doing in my behalf as you yourself. Tête-Boule, as you say, has made this Windigo matter worse at the post by his talk; but he's scared to death—that's all. As to your movements and those traps, nothing shall be known here."

So the dog-teams, followed by the blanketed bloodhound, jingled out of the clearing and down to the river ice on their strange quest. And until the bend shut them from sight, a knot of post Indians in awed wonder watched the sleds speeding south. For that men should thus calmly set out in search of a horrible death was a matter beyond their ken.

Gordon Arthur Smith

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"The Square Wheel."

Chapter Twenty-seven

ONE morning a week later, Steele was frying moose-steak in his camp in the spruce on the Little Medicine River. Three days before, David had started with the dogs for the rendezvous at the mouth of the Stooping River, where from Portage Lake word would be left on a piece of birch-bark by the partner of Michel. In the Medicine Hills the friends had found most of the Indians back on their trap-lines, but uneasy and fearful of the early return of the Windigo; and the conditions along the Phantom chain of lakes were similar. Should the beast once again lift its voice from a ridge to fill the night with terror within hearing of but one hunter's lodge, or its misshapen tracks appear in the snow, in a week the country for fifty miles would be deserted by fleeing dog-teams.

As Steele sat by his fire eating his breakfast of moose, bannock and tea, the nose of Windigo, the hound, lying at his side, lifted to sniff the air. Then a low rumble swelled his black throat.

"What's the matter, old boy? Smell something?" Steele patted the dog's wrinkled forehead.

The wind blowing upstream again brought the message, and springing to his feet, the bloodhound ran toward the river, sucking in the biting air through quivering nostrils, then raised his head in a deep-throated bay.

"Something downriver that he's scented," said the man aloud. "I wonder if it's caribou crossing on the ice." Curious, Steele left his breakfast to follow the dog to the river ice, where already his heavy voice boomed out upon the silence of the frozen forest. For a space he gazed downstream at a dark object moving up the white trail, then exclaimed:

"That's David! And he's pushing the dogs for all there's in them! News! He's heard from Michel!"

Running to the tent, Steele hastily got his bags ready for a swift return downriver, then returned to the ice.

In a matter of minutes David, with face circled by the frost from his hot breath, drove his light sled up to Steele, the noses of his dogs white with rime.

"Get de stuff on de sled, queek!" cried the excited Ojibway. "Here ees de word from Michel!" And he thrust into Steele's hand a roll of birch-bark on which, in the syllabic writing of the woods Indian, was burned the message from Michel, in Ojibway, left at the jack pine by Little Jacques.

"'Come to Portage Lak', fas',' " read David over Steele's shoulder. "'Plentee work for de dog! Michel.' "

"Well, Windigo, old boy," said Steele, tying the blanket on the short-haired hound, "you're going to have your chance soon, and if you don't track your namesake down, and scare him to death with that steam-whistle of a voice, there'll be trouble between you and me."

Whining, the dog rubbed his heavy muzzle against Steele's rabbit-skin mitten as if he understood, then leaped into the snow, anxious to be off.

THAT night they camped on the Wailing, and in the morning pushed on up the Stooping River trail to Portage Lake, following the sled-tracks of Little Jacques. Still the snow held off, but Portage Lake and Michel were fifty miles away. On traveled the willing huskies, as if they too knew that the snow would not wait, that when it came, the trail of the Windigo which Michel had found would be beyond the keen nose of the strange dog from the South.

But in the early afternoon of the second day from the Wailing, when the narrowing of the river and the break in the hills ahead indicated their nearness to their goal, the snow they feared began to fall. Shortly Little Jacques' sled-trail grew fainter and fainter on the wind-packed snow, and vanished. And by the time the team turned into Portage Lake and sought a camping-place in the thick scrub back from the shore, men and dogs were sheeted in white.

"Well, we've lost again!" said Steele, bitter with disappointment.

"We know bettair w'en we see Michel," replied the philosophic Indian.

"Where do you suppose he's camped?"

"Een de morning, eef de snow stop, we travel up de lak'; den he see us."

Chaining the dogs to separate trees to prevent fighting, David threw them their supper of frozen whitefish, while the ax of Steele rang on the frosty air as it bit into a birch. The size of the chips which flew at each *chug* of the sharp blade bore eloquent witness to the sting of his defeat after the grueling three days of sledding to reach Michel. It had been all in vain.

Soon, as the early November night shut down like a blanket on the white lake, the birch-logs blazed high before the shed-tent, and the tea-pail and the kettle of moose stew were simmering over red coals.

"If the old boy is loose now, he'll appear and sing again somewhere. There's some consolation in that," said Steele as he filled his pipe.

"We strike hees trail yet, you nevaire—" David broke short off, to rise and peer suddenly into the wall of murk hemming in the fire in the scrub.

"Hear something?" laughed the dejected American. "Probably a wood-mouse!"

The Ojibway stood tense, motionless, then walked swiftly into the blackness beyond the circle of light from the fire. A husky growled; then the deep throat of the bloodhound swelled in hoarse challenge.

"What is it, David?" called the man at the fire. But there was no response from the other, who had faded into the night.

The excited dogs broke into a chorus of howls, to the accompaniment of the bass of the hound. There was something out there in the snow-curtained gloom. Steele rose to his feet. Then a voice called: "*Bonjour,* Daveed!" Michel had found tnem.

"Hello, Michel!" Steele cried, shaking the hand of the Iroquois, who preceded David to the campfire. "We did our best to beat the snow here, but it was no use. Now tell us about it!"

Seated with his friends by the flaming birch-logs, the head-man told his story.

WHEN Michel and Jacques reached the Little Current, he had found all but a few of the most timid hunters on their trap-lines. There had been rumors afloat in the valley, of the howling of the beast at Big Feather, but the Portage Lake hunters had refused to listen to an Indian who claimed that he had heard the Windigo, in September, on the ridge across from Wailing River Post.

"Dat Pierre he try do good job."

"It was Pierre, was it?"

"Yes, he try hard to scare dem on de Little Curren', too."

But to the surprise of Michel, he had returned to Portage Lake to find a camp of hunters he had left but two days before, wild with fear and preparing to leave the country. For in his absence the Windigo had filled the night with horror from a neighboring ridge. Michel had lost no time in finding the trail and following it down to a creek, where he lost it on the ice, and although he followed the stream for miles, failed again to pick it up. Then he had sent Little Jacques with the message which David had found at the rendezvous.

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"Well, he's in this country, and we'll keep after him," said Steele, when the headman had finished his story.

"Dere may be more dan one," Michel answered.

"More than one Windigo? Why?"

"Dese track I hunt down to de ice ees not same we fin' at Stoopin' Rivière. Dese track more beeg, an' roun'. Ver' queer track!"

"Round, were they? What do you think of that, David?"

David rose, and taking his rifle from its skin case, calmly proceeded to fill the magazine from his pocket.

"I t'ink dat we bettair fin' good place up lak', for camp an' hunt de Windigo. Two ees more easee dan one to track een de snow. Eef Michel have Pete, de Windigohoun', w'en he see dem track, he get shot at heem."

"Weel de dog trail on de ice?" asked Michel of Steele.

"We found that he would hold our trail three hours after we had crossed bare ice on the Little Medicine, and over hard snow, much longer."

"Ah-hah! Good! We soon geeve heem job."

There was nothing to do but patrol the country, following the trappers' camps, in the hope that some night luck would strike them, and they should wake from their warm robes to hear the voice. Michel, who had seen their fire from his camp across the outlet, left them. Now that the snow had come, the two friends prayed that it would continue and fall deep on the ice in the creek-bottoms, to the discomfiture of a fleeing Windigo. But would he run if he knew they were on his trail? The two men heartily wished him the courage of a wolverine, for then at last they would see what nature of beast or fiend had so long terrorized the valley of the Wailing.

As Steele rolled himself in his blankets under the shed tent by the fire, he wondered if the girl at Wailing River, who had so lightly weighed him and found him wanting, had paused to consider whether the choice of a winter of toil with the dogs on the snow of the Hudson's Bay watershed, rather than the alternative of the soft life of the city, bore any indication of the singleness of his heart.

Chapter Twenty-eight

IN the morning Little Jacques was sent back to the post with a letter from Steele informing St. Onge of the reappearance in the Portage Lake country of the night wailer, and stating that unless sent for, the party would not return downriver while their provisions lasted. He expressed the hope of being able, with the help of the hound, to obtain a shot at the creature if it remained near the lake. Denise he did not mention.

With David and Michel breaking trail through the foot of new snow which had fallen overnight, the party started on the ice for the mouth of Still River, a small tributary of the lake on which there was a trappers' camp which Michel had not yet visited. Arriving at the tepee of the Ojibways, they found them loading their sleds preparatory to a hasty departure, the dark faces of two men and a boy marked with fear, while from the interior of the lodge rose the low wailing of women.

"What are you doing? Why do you leave good otter and mink water and the ridges which have given you many pelts of the silver and black fox? There is much flour and sugar and tea; there are many trade-goods at the post which wait for you to come with your pelts at New Year's. Where are you going?" Michel asked in Ojibway.

Opening his arms in a dramatic gesture, the older of the men replied: "How can we stay? The Windigo howls at night from the ridges and robs our trap-lines. We are afraid, and dare not remain to be eaten."

"What, has he cried again?" shouted the excited Michel.

"Yes, he wailed and wept last night when the snow covered the moon. Our women will not pass another sleep here; we fear he will find and kill us."

"Where was he?"

"On the ridge there." The Indian pointed.

"No good!" Michel turned to Steele. "De snow cover hees track." Then he asked: "You say he robbed your traps. Did you see the trail?"

"Oh, yes, his trail was everywhere. One sleep before the new snow fell, he followed my fox and marten traps, and ate two foxes —the snow was red with blood. They were large—the tracks of the man-eater, very large; and we ran when we saw them."

"Will you stay tonight in your tepee if we camp here? This is a great shaman from the South." Michel pointed to Steele. "He has a dog that hunts the Windigo—he has a magic howl, and the Windigo fears him. He has bewitched many Windigo in his own country with his great voice. Tomorrow we will go with you to your traplines. No harm will come to you because of this medicine man and his shaman dog."

The Ojibways gazed in awe and wonder at the great hound, strange to the North, with the pendulous ears and the furrowed forehead, then argued rapidly among themselves, finally calling their women from the tent.

"Listen, you will hear the voice that carries fear to the Windigo. —Can you make de dog howl?" asked Michel of Steele, who understood the drift of the conversation.

"Come here, Pete!" The hound trotted up to his master. Then Steele made mysterious passes over the dog's head and began to spar with him, which he had discovered excited the dog, and in the end brought a deep-toned note of protest. Shortly as his master pushed him around in the deep snow, to which he was not as yet accustomed, the black nose lifted, and the deep bass of the bloodhound startled the amazed audience, to draw a frenzy of yelping from the huskies.

"The Windigo will not come tonight, for he knows the shaman dog can follow his trail even through water, and in his voice there is death," said Michel gravely to the impressed Indians. "If you will unload your sleds and camp here, near us, we will bring the skin of the Windigo to hang from your lodgepoles, before the moon changes."

After considerable discussion with his people, the older Indian replied: "We do not wish to leave the hunting-ground of our fathers. As you say, there is game on the ridges and in the creek-bottoms. If you will camp here with the white medicine man and the shaman dog with the voice of thunder, we will stay."

"We will camp here and keep the Windigo away," answered Michel, trusting that the beast would prove him a false prophet.

IN the morning, leaving David at the camp to ease the fear of the women, Steele and Michel slipped into their snowshoes, and taking the hound, drove their sled with the traps to the first lines of marten and fox sets on the neighboring ridges. There, along the line which the Windigo had robbed, Michel set the six double-spring wolf-traps under the new snow near the marten *cabañes*, chaining them to spruce logs, which he buried. At two of the fox sets, to the wonder and admiration of the Ojibways, who trapped bear in the spring with log deadfalls only, and had never seen such engines of steel designed to hold helpless the most powerful beast, Michel and Steele brought from their sled the two bear-traps. To open and set the jaws of these, it was necessary to pry the powerful springs down with five-inch birch-sticks wedged under the root of a spruce. These also were buried in the snow where an animal approaching the baited fox-trap would step on the pan, releasing the yawning jaws.

Continuing, the Indians visited other trap-lines, until it was necessary to turn back to reach camp before the early dusk; but nowhere was the new snow marked by the trail of the beast. Beyond, for miles, they had still other lines extending up the valley and over ridges, small lakes and ponds, but they refused to leave their families overnight.

FIVE uneventful days passed. Confident of the supernatural powers of Steele and his strange dog, whom they now heard in full voice in the forest following the trail of Michel, the Indians began to travel their lines of traps. Steele, with Michel and the hound, had visited many camps of hunters in the district, who were wavering between a desire for a general stampede and reluctance to leave a rich fur-country. But the tale of Michel, and the great voice and mysterious looks of the hound, again worked their spell. However, it was clear that a few more nights of the Windigo at Portage Lake would mean a general exodus.

On the afternoon of the sixth day of Little Jacques' absence, a dog-team limped slowly up the Still River trail.

"There he is!" cried Steele. "Now we'll hear how things have been going down below." And he hurried to the ice to meet the half-breed.

"*Bonjour*, Jacques! What's been driving you so hard? Your dogs are all in."

"Dere ees bad news down rivière."

"What's happened, quick? What is it?" Steele's heart skipped a beat, then started to pound, as he flinched from the answer to his question; David and Michel, with anxious faces, joined him.

"De night we leave Wailing Rivière to hunt de Windigo, he holler on de ridge. De peop' are ver' scare'."

Steele glanced at his friends and found them nodding in quiet satisfaction; whereupon he said to the astonished half-breed:

"Jacques, that's not bad news; that's good news! He's moving around, and we'll hear him yet. Where's the letter?"

The dog-runner handed Steele a letter wrapped in oilskin, which ran as follows:

"Monsieur Steele:

"Jacques brought your note. I am glad to learn that you have hope of the hound. On the night you left, the Windigo wailed again on the ridge opposite us. At daylight, as none of the men would go with me, I went alone to find the trail. I ran upon some tracks, but soon lost them in the hard snow packed by the wind. We could have done much with the hound.

"I am in fear that something has happened to Tête-Boule. He left for the caribou barrens a week before you reached us, and is long overdue. Jacques tells me you did not find my message at the rendezvous. I sent Gaspard, but he may have feared the Windigo and lied to me. My daughter and I are well and send our felicitations.

"Hilaire St. Onge."

"Well, what have you got to say, Michel?" demanded Steele.

"I say w'en de dogs res', Jacques go down rivière an' breeng up grub. De Windigo ees on dees lak' now. We hear heem soon."

David nodded and Steele continued:

"He had a week to wander up here and yell that night of the snow after he howled at the post. I believe he is still in this country. If he will only come back and follow down that line of traps again on that ridge!"

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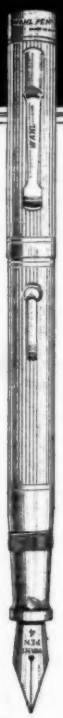
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